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MEMOIR

OF

REVEREND MOTHER

MARY TERESA COMERFORD.

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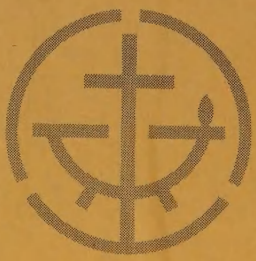

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MEMOIR

OF REV. MOTHER

MARY TERESA COMERFORD,

FOUNDRESS OF THE CONVENTS OF THE PRESENTATION ORDER ON THE PACIFIC COAST,

And the Missionary Novitiate, Kilcock, Ireland.

By Josephine Hagerty

SAN FRANCISCO:
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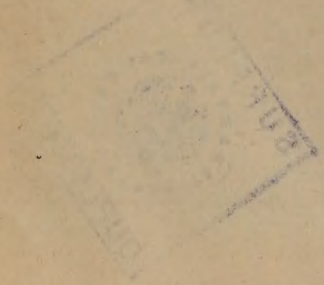

PREFACE.

THIS Memoir of Rev. Mother MARY TERESA COMERFORD was never intended for the press, and has been written solely at the desire of the religious children of the venerated Foundress, who requested the writer to collect reminiscences of her life. The fact that these pages have been penned by one whose privilege to know Mother MARY TERESA was delayed until the latter years of her beautiful life, and that at an immense distance from the scene of her childhood and first years in the cloister, may account somewhat for the brevity and incompleteness of the Biography. Filial affection, lingering by the grave still moistened with the tears of her children, would fain produce in worthier language this sketch of one who is revered more for what she was than for the great things she achieved in behalf of the *free* (religious and literary) education of the female youth of San Francisco. It is to be regretted, too, that the circumstance of time is the cause of the omission of many interesting and edifying details recorded of Mother MARY TERESA in the annals of her

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Communities, which may be recounted at a later period. Other deficiencies, too, owing to the writer's having no pretensions to "book-making," will, it is hoped, be rectified in some future edition of this little work, and by some more competent and favored biographer.

For the rest, if the following pages be accepted at the Throne of Mercy as Gratitude's humblest tribute to the memory of Mother Mary Teresa, they will have served their purpose.

Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin, 1881.

NOTE.

MANY of the lives of the holy daughters of Nano Nagle might be published as perfect models for the cloister; but the Presentation Nuns creditably deem it their modest privilege to seek that "the world should never know them for praise or blame." A poet of our days justly writes of them:

"Their lives are little known or praised,
Their labors never done;
It rarely comes their way to hear
A word—would seem to prove
That they are recognized on earth
As souls who work for love.
* * * *
Their place is still behind the desk,
Their labors in the school;
Their whole perfection twined about
The one unvarying rule."

And Mother MARY TERESA, true to the spirit of her Order, begged that no eulogies of what she termed her "humble deeds" should be permitted after her death. For she was amongst the number who look for their "reward not partly here, but fully and entirely hereafter." The request of the venerated Foundress demands an apology for the appearance of her Memoir in print, which will be found, we hope, sufficient, in the fact that Mrs. Joseph A. Donohoe, of the city of San Francisco—an intimate friend and generous benefactress of Mother MARY TERESA—wishing to add still further to her many testimonies of esteem for, and admiration of the revered Reverend Mother, asked "the privilege" of placing the manuscript in the printer's hands and defraying the entire expense of the publication of this little volume.

NANO NAGLE.

THE following notes from the London *Tablet* on the Foundress of the Presentation Order of Nuns may not inappropriately precede the Life of one of her most worthy daughters, Mother MARY TERESA COMERFORD:

"The life and labors of O'Connell and Nano Nagle had a singularly close historical and religious connection. Miss Nagle was born in 1728, by the Blackwater, east of Mallow, of an old patrician Anglo-Norman stock, descended from Gilbert de Angulo, who, with his two sons, Jocelyn and Hostilio, were amongst the Knights who accompanied Richard de Clare (or Strongbow) at the invasion of Ireland, in 1169. The Nagles, barons of Navan, and the Munster Nagles, were alike of this family. Sir Richard Nagle was Speaker of the Irish Parliament and Secretary of State to James II., whom he accompanied to exile in France, by which act he forfeited his estates. His brother, Pierce Nagle, was High Sheriff of Cork in 1668, being the last Catholic who held the office until after the passing of the Emancipation Act in 1829, a period of upwards of one hundred and sixty years. The Nagles were intermarried with the Llandaff family, the Matthewses of Thomastine, County Tipperary,

one of whom was the great preacher of Temperance. The eldest son of Edmund Spenser married a Miss Nagle; the poet wrote "The Fairie Queene" at Kilcolman Castle, within a few miles of the residence of her family. But one of the most illustrious alliances of which the Nagles could boast is that with Edmund Burke, the first philosophic statesman of modern times. Richard Burke, the father of Edmund, married Mary, daughter of Patrick, brother of Janet Nagle, father of Nano, so that the venerable foundress of the Presentation Order of Nuns and the celebrated Edmund Burke were first cousins.

"Miss Nagle, like all persons of her class in those days, was educated in France, where she appeared in the gay Court of Versailles. Finding that she had a vocation, and acting under advice, she determined to return home and devote herself to the instruction of the neglected female youth of her country. She introduced the Irish Ursuline Nuns into Cork, and obtained in 1771 episcopal sanction for their establishment. She saw that the mass of the poor were without provision for Christian knowledge, moral culture, or industrial training. To these objects she determined to devote her fortune and her life, and, having secured the sympathy and co-operation of a few ladies, she formed a society in 1775 for the instruction of the poor, and on the 29th of June, 1776, received the holy habit of religion in her new congregation at

Cork, consisting of herself and three companions. They did not, however, enter into residence in their new convent until Christmas Day, 1777.

"A glance at the progress of the Order affords a gratifying retrospect of the history of Catholicity in Ireland during the century. About twenty years before Miss Nagle was born there were only four 'religious' priests in the city of Cork. When she first opened her schools, Catholic education, abroad as well as at home, was wholly illegal, entailing the most severe punishment. Subsequently, Catholic schools were allowed to be opened, with the license of the Protestant Bishop, provided the teachers subscribed to the required oaths and admitted no Protestant pupil into their schools. Such licenses for the Presentation Convent Schools in the cities of Cork and Waterford were obtained in 1799, and form highly interesting records of the Penal Laws against Catholic education. Yet the extension of the convent schools went on until they were established in most of the dioceses, and in all the leading cities and towns in at least three of the provinces. When O'Connell was born in 1775, Dr. Moyland, one of the earliest friends of Miss Nagle and of her aims, was Bishop of Kerry, and when he was translated to the See of Cork in succession to the unfortunate Lord Dunboyne, he was the means of planting in Kilkenny, in 1793, the first branch of the Presentation Order in Ireland. O'Connell was the greatest friend to the

Order, and in 1840 subdivided a branch on his estate in Cahirciveen, while the diocese of Kerry has now nine houses, or more than any single diocese in the country. There are nearly sixty convents in fifteen dioceses in Ireland; while there are others in Manchester, Madras, Victoria, Wagga Wagga, Tasmania, Newfoundland, New York and San Francisco, or about eighty houses in all. These convents stretch from Labrador to the Southern Ocean, over two hemispheres.

"An Irish writer, summarizing the fruits of that Foundation, happily says: 'The daughters of Nano Nagle, who may be said to have feloniously opened schools and founded a convent in Cork, more than a century ago, are now spread from the confines of the arctic region to some of the highest inhabited latitudes in the southern hemisphere. On the American continent they occupy the Golden Gate, on the Pacific, at San Francisco; they have the largest schools in the Empire City, on the Atlantic; almost all the daughters of the hardy fishers of Newfoundland are brought up at their knees; for nearly forty years the colored and the European children of Madras have learned to bless the memory of the Munster nun; upon the southern shores of Australia, in St. Kilda, near Melbourne, and Wagga Wagga, near Goulbourn, the voice of Nano Nagle is heard; while across the Straits, in Launceston and Hobart Town, in the streets of Tasmania, the Presentation Nuns diffuse

culture and civilization in that remote antipodean region. They are found among the busy marts of Manchester as well as those of New York, San Francisco and Madras. Neither arctic region nor torrid zone can deter them; while every dell in her native Desmond holds in benediction the valiant woman, born by the Blackwater in 1728, in whose noble schools so large a portion of the mothers of the ten millions of Irish Catholics dispersed over the globe received that solid Christian training, and largely learned to prize those domestic virtues that, amid the vicissitudes of their history, remain the proud and glorious inheritance of 'the name and the fame of the sea-divided Gael.' "

Rev. Mother Mary Teresa Comerford.

CHAPTER I.

Her Birth and Childhood.

"You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and have appointed you that you should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

THESE words of our Divine Lord may serve as an introduction to the modest memoir we attempt to write of the venerated Foundress of the Presentation Convents on the Pacific coast; for God had bestowed on her all the dispositions of nature and grace which were necessary for the accomplishment of the mission for which He destined her.

She was descended from one of the ancient Anglo-Norman families in Ireland, more illustrious for its inviolable attachment to the Faith than for the nobleness of its origin.

Of this family the late Sir William Bethem writes: "Sir Henry de Comerford and his nephew, Sir Fulio de Comerford, came over with John, son of Henry II. of England, A. D. 1189. Sir Fulio returned to England; Sir Henry remained in Ireland and became the ancestor of the Comerford families. At a later period the chief branch or main line of the house settled in county Kilkenny, and were styled Lords, or Barons, several of whom suffered much from the tyranny of England, in consequence of their attachment to their Faith and loyalty to their country."

The late Nicholas Comerford, Esq., of Coolgrany, county Kilkenny, father of Bridget Mary Teresa Comerford, during his long career of 85 years, proved worthy of his illustrious progenitors by his true Catholic spirit, his paternal affection and his benevolence and charity towards his dependents. "He possessed the confidence of all who knew him and exercised an extensive influence in the county in which he lived." His amiable wife was not less beloved. Rare merits, joined to genuine piety, endeared her to all in her own circle, while her charity caused her to be regarded by the poor as a ministering angel. Heaven blessed this happy union with a numerous family. Their third child was born on the 19th of February, in the year 1821, and on the 22d of the same month she received at baptism the name of Bridget, to which in religion was added that of Mary Teresa. The pious parents gave the name of their National Patroness to their privileged child in conformity with the desire of our Holy Mother the Church that her children should, on the day of their baptism, be placed under the protection of some great and illustrious Saint. It was a kind of presage of their child's future destiny when, like that Saint whose name is so dear to every Irish heart, she should become the mother of many virgins, and found a convent in that county of the Emerald Isle once illumined by the virtues of St. Bridget.

The rudiments of her religious and literary education she received in her parental home with her brothers and sisters. The former was scrupulously attended to by her pious parents, who, regarding the treasure of innocence above all those which opulence confers, were careful to exclude from their household everything that might be a stumbling block to their dear little ones, whom, like the mother of St. Aloysius and St. Francis of

Sales, they would have preferred to see expire a thousand times rather than know they had been sullied by one sin. From this we may judge how careful they were in the selection of governesses and tutors for their children.

As Bridget advanced in age her character gave evidence of genuine qualities and natural gifts, which correspondence with grace and religious training were hereafter to perfect. When about nine years of age she was presented for admission to her first Communion in her parochial church. The Vicar-General, Very Rev. F. Nolan, a man of rigid principles, at once concluded she was too young. He, however, examined her in Catechism, and her replies giving evidence that her religious instruction was carefully developed, she was soon permitted to receive the Bread of Angels, which infused into her soul new grace and light, leading her to rest in that Sacred Heart for whose honor she afterwards labored so faithfully in a foreign land.

About this time she conceived a great affection for St. John the Evangelist, having heard his life read by her good father who was accustomed to assemble his household for spiritual reading on Sundays and festivals. This devotion to the Beloved Disciple served to enkindle a love for that Divine Heart for which she was afterwards distinguished.

In her youth, too, she had a very remarkable dream, which she sometimes related in after life. She thought she was walking in the verdant and woody lawns which surround her early home in the Isle of Saints, when suddenly she perceived a tall figure approach her. The unknown personage wore a lose hair garment. Beside him walked a milk-white lamb; and in his hand he bore a beautiful wreath of flowers which he seemed to present to Bridget. But, when she approached to receive it, he withdrew it, smiling and saying: "When you earn it you will

get it," and then disappeared. She told her wonderful dream and was informed that the strange personage represented St. John. Thinking her interpreter meant St. John the Evangelist, she was in great delight, for at the time she knew of no other St. John, and felt somewhat disappointed when shown a picture of St. John the Baptist, in which she recognized the subject of her dream.

Trifling as this incident may appear, it nevertheless made a lasting impression on the guileless young girl who made serious reflections on the best manner to earn the "Mystic Crown."

CHAPTER II.

Her Education and Entrance into Religion.

BRIDGET had now reached her twelfth year, and it was considered full time to place her in some seminary where she would receive an education which would prepare her to occupy at a future period that position in society to which her birth and station entitled her. Her eldest brother (Very Reverend Doctor Comerford), who was a few years her senior, was about to commence his collegiate studies for the priesthood, to which he felt himself called. These circumstances necessitated a separation from parents so dearly loved and a home so fondly cherished. Accordingly Bridget was sent to one of the first academies in the city of Kilkenny which was under the superintendence of Mrs. Doyle, a highly educated and accomplished lady.

There Bridget fully realized the expectation of her parents and was soon prepared to continue her more advanced studies in the Bridgetine Convent, Tullow, whither she was sent with her elder sister to complete their education. Being gifted with superior talents Bridget's progress was rapid and her mind quickly developed, giving promise of a rich harvest, which was soon afterwards devoted to the service of God in the humble school of the Presentation Order.

Having finished her studies she returned to her home a beautiful and accomplished young lady. Here her amiable gaiety, joined to her gentle bearing and unaffected, innate dignity, won her general affection and esteem. Still her noble instincts and

genuine piety rendered her insensible to her attractions and placed her above vanity. Her happy character led her to prefer literary to more enlivening amusements. Tenderness of feeling, however, towards all God's works was manifested in the care she took of plants and flowers; she also had her pet lambs and dogs. The latter often practically returned her affection, and in after life she sometimes told her novices anecdotes illustrative of their care and protection of their young mistress. Her pious aspirations prompted her to take particular care of oratories in her own home, and this solicitude she soon extended to the altars in neighboring churches, sensible of the honor conferred by being allowed to minister to the person of our Lord in preparing the sanctuary for the sacred mysteries.

Bridget had now spent some years in the parental home and mingled in that gay and refined society of which she was a brilliant ornament. She was not dazzled by its vanities and allurements; her piety and good sense were her shield; her virtues expanded rather than contracted under its fascinating influence. She heard in her young heart the Divine Voice bidding her "Hearken, O daughter, and forget thy people and thy father's house!" Her generous nature knew no delay when God spoke, and, docile to his warning, she determined to leave all.

She informed her estimable parents of her intentions, and though their daughter's choice was not surprising, as they knew her pious attractions, yet the consequent separation was a severe blow to their affection for their favorite daughter. Nevertheless they were too good Christians to place any impediments to the Divine call when it inspired their children to devote themselves to the immediate service of God. Bridget seemed drawn to the Carmelite Order, and consulted a holy Priest with a view to

entering therein. He was unacquainted with her previously, but he prophetically replied that she was not called to a contemplative Order, that God intended for her a more active vocation in which she should do great things for His glory. There were many inducements presented to her to enter an Order not bound to inclosure, but her first preference for the contemplative triumphed over the persuasion of friends, and she finally determined to select the Presentation, as its seclusion from the world affords a special facility to unite the meditations of Mary with the action of Martha. The love of God and a desire for his glory made her wean herself from her exclusive love of solitude, and thus choose the laborious life of the Presentation Nun,

> "Whose life's so little known or heard,
> Whose labor 's never done."

With the permission of Right Reverend William Kinsella, Bishop of Ossory, she was admitted into the Presentation Convent, Kilkenny. This worthy prelate, recommending her as a postulant, amongst her other good qualities, remarked especially her sincere humility, and described her as "the excellent daughter of Mr. Comerford."

The 17th of July was the day fixed for her departure for the Convent, and though Bridget had always intended to be a religious, now, at the moment when she was to sacrifice all that was dearest, nature revolted, (for grace does not extinguish our natural feelings, but leads us to rise above them,) and so, with the courage which grace only can give, she bade "Good-by" to all.

The parting of her father with his favorite daughter was truly affecting. Both wept. Bridget knelt to receive his blessing, and the noble parent, not wishing to be surpassed by

the generosity of his child, suppressed his emotion, freely acquiescing to the decrees of Providence, and confided her to the care of Very Reverend Doctor Nolan, who accompanied her to the Presentation Convent, Kilkenny. The pious postulant made no reserve in her offering to God, and, from her entrance to her happy death, might be applied to her the words of Scripture: "The path of the just is like the sun, which goeth forward and increaseth in brightness even unto perfect day."

CHAPTER III.

Sister Mary Teresa Goes on the Foreign Mission.

ON the 18th of January, 1842, she received the holy habit of the Presentation Nun. Her noviceship was one of holy fervor. Her cheerful demeanor and zealous conformity with the rule, notwithstanding her delicate constitution, was truly edifying. Her confidence in, and humble submission to Superiors, to whom alone she confided the secrets of her conscience, was the source of her peace of soul and constancy of purpose.

As the time of her profession drew near, the fervent novice, still more deeply impressed with the sublimity of her vocation, prepared for her sacred espousals with all the ardor of her generous soul. The ceremony took place on the 17th of January, 1844. The venerable Bishop Kinsella, having previously prepared (as he used to call her) "His Lamb," received her vows, Mother de Sales Meighan being Superior at that period.

Sister Mary Teresa's love for prayer, for which she was remarkable during her whole religious career, became more manifest after her profession. Her zeal for God's glory and the good of souls urged her to utilize every moment of spare time in storing her mind with useful information, that she might afterwards use it in promoting God's glory and the salvation and happiness of her pupils. She had a particular talent for drawing and needlework of every description, and the classes taught by her in the Kilkenny Presentation Convent showed superiority in those arts. Many of the latter useful acquirements were eagerly

purchased from the poor children by the wives of the English officers garrisoned from time to time in that city. Sister Mary Teresa possessed many attractions of which neither age, climate or crosses deprived her, and which she made use of only to promote the glory of God.

Her mild and sweet appearance, joined to her dignified and winning manners, gave her an unusual influence over all with whom she came in contact. Her friends never left her presence without feeling consoled and edified, while the poor revered her as their heaven-sent Instructress and Benefactress; and, years after her departure for the Foreign Mission, when meeting other members of her family, they recited their obligations to her, and their grief that she had gone.

She had passed seven years in the cloister when it pleased God to summon to Himself the amiable spirit of her justly-loved mother, whose memory for many years after was held in benediction by the poor of the district in which she lived. This trial deeply affected Bridget's affectionate heart, while at the same time she meekly and lovingly acquiesced in the will of Heaven, consoling by her word and example her afflicted father and his sorrowing children. From her mother she inherited a great devotion to St. Francis Xavier, and from reading his Life and the accounts of his missionary labors, she became very zealous for the promotion of the Association for the Propagation of the Faith. She read the Annals of this Society with a holy eagerness, inspired by that love of God which made her yearn to spread the Kingdom of Jesus Christ in distant lands.

The Foreign Mission seemed indeed to be the special calling of the three members of her family who were consecrated to God; for we find her brother, Very Rev. Dr. Comerford, with burning zeal laboring under the tropical sun of the Mauritius, where

his devotedness to his priestly duties made him the edification and idol of his flock; and, later, we shall see her sister joining her in the "Land of the West."

For many years, Sister Mary Teresa awaited an opportunity to accomplish her desire to labor in lands beyond the seas. In the meantime she occupied herself with her own sanctification, making herself a fitting instrument for such a high destiny. In 1854, a clergyman going to travel on the continent of Europe acquainted her of his intention to visit the Curé of Ars, whose sanctity is one of the marvels of the nineteenth century. She asked this priest to consult the holy Curé regarding her vocation for the Foreign Mission; and, in reply, the servant of God directed her to make a Novena, to know God's will.

A few months previous, the Rev. Hugh Gallagher came to Ireland on business connected with the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He proposed to the Superioress of the Presentation Convent, Midleton, County Cork, to send some members of her community to found a branch of the Order in California. This holy religious having begged light from the Almighty and consulted the Bishop, the Mission was determined on.

Five religious were selected for the undertaking—Mother Mary Joseph Cronin being appointed Superioress, and Mother Mary Xavier Daly, Assistant; Mother Mary Augustine Keane, Bursar; Sister Mary Clare Duggan and Sister Mary Ignatius Lanigan. As they were to sail for the New World from Liverpool, it was necessary they should proceed thence by Dublin. Arriving at that city they were hospitably received by the Presentation nuns of George's Hill. Their passages were taken on the steamship "Arctic;" but as it could not afford proper accommodation, it was thought advisable to wait two weeks longer for the next steamer.

In the interim Sister Mary Ignatius fell sick and was obliged to return to her Convent in Midleton. Her Superioress, Mother Mary Teresa Maloney, not having any one to send in her stead, wrote to the Presentation Convent, Kilkenny, earnestly entreating Sister Mary Teresa Comerford (of whose desire for the Foreign Mission she was aware) to supply the place of the sick Sister and to proceed without delay to join the missioners, who were to sail in two days. This entreaty was received on the very last day of the Novena directed to be said by the holy Curé of Ars, and was regarded as an unmistakable manifestation of the Divine Will to the young religious, who so long and ardently desired to consecrate her life to the education of female youth in distant lands. The only difficulty was to obtain the permission of her Superiors. The lately-elected Superioress of Kilkenny Convent, who knew and appreciated the virtues and worth of Sister Mary Teresa, was slow to allow her leave her community, and sought an interview with the Bishop, Right Rev. Dr. Walshe, to prevail on him to withhold his consent to her departure for some time.

It so happened that Sister Mary Teresa was the first to meet his Lordship that evening. She informed him with much ardor of the opportunity presented for the accomplishing of her wish to sacrifice every tie for Christian education. With much reluctance, his Lordship at length consented, saying: "Though your services are required in your own Convent, I will not oppose what is manifestly the will of God." But, as there was no time to investigate matters the good Bishop added, emphatically, "In case your rule cannot be carried out, or that you wish to return, I give the permission only conditionally." In this substitution of Sister Mary Teresa for Sister Mary Ignatius we are forcibly reminded of that providential arrangement of the Om-

niscient, which, three centuries previous, by a similar accident, caused a Saint Francis Xavier to take the place of Bobadilla.

With a hasty farewell to her beloved father, and a magnanimous courage, this worthy daughter of Nano Nagle quickly prepared to join the missioners, all of whom were strangers to her, and proceeded to Dublin, from whence she was to sail on the following day.

CHAPTER IV.

The Journey to California.

AT the period of which we write that portion of the "Far West," for which the little band of cloistered nuns was destined, was comparatively little known in Europe. San Francisco, it is true, owing to the discovery of gold in 1849, had grown rapidly until 1854, when business received a check and property began to decline in value. These local disadvantages, with many other circumstances, were not calculated to encourage the establishment of a cloistered convent in that diocese; and many friends endeavored to dissuade Sister Mary Teresa from her holy purpose—urging her return to Kilkenny, as it was apprehended the mission would not succeed. Having but a few hours to deliberate, she placed her confidence in the "good God" and continued the journey.

On the 21st of September, 1854, these Presentation nuns left the shores of their native land, which for centuries had given apostolic souls to plant the seeds of heavenly truth and useful lore in distant climes. The voyage was a pleasant one. Their party consisted of Rev. Fathers Gallagher, Cassin and Cody, Mother Agnes, Superioress of the Convent of Mercy, New York, and cousin of Sister Mary Teresa, with eight Sisters of Mercy, who were also bound for California. They landed in New York on the 5th of October and there learned the sad fate of the "Arctic," and its passengers, who were nearly all lost. Here was a new motive of gratitude and confidence in

God, whose merciful Providence had prevented their embarkation on that ill-fated steamer.

Want of accommodation obliged Mother Mary Agnes reluctantly to consent to the Presentation nuns seeking hospitality from the Sisters of Charity while waiting for the steamer that was to convey them to Panama. Two weeks later they went on board the "North Star," bound for Aspinwall. The voyage was favorable. On landing there, they found that the railroad had been laid only through a part of the Isthmus and that the remainder had to be crossed on mules, trained to travel over hill and dale, through marsh and river, without other guide than their instinct. This journey was most trying and perilous. The nuns, too, were all ladies of refinement, whose long residence in the cloister was little calculated to render them suited to such a mode of traveling. A train conveying 1,000 passengers was nearly wrecked on the brink of a precipice from want of proper force to propel it. No refreshment of any nature, an indiscriminate mixture of travelers hurrying to the Land of Gold, the fear of meeting in the wilderness Indian robbers who had lately plundered and massacred a party of whites crossing the Isthmus, the sloughs through which they had to ride, were some of the principal features of this original mode of travel in Central America.

At the starting point for Panama the mules were assembled in hundreds waiting their burdens and accompanied by their Indian masters. The poor nuns stood bewildered, and would probably have been left behind but for the kindness of some gentlemen who advised them to mount the animals and proceed without delay, their only security being to keep up with the other travelers. The religious wished to dispense with the Indian guide assigned them, but, to prove that he was necessary, he purposely drove Sister Mary Teresa's mule into a deep

slough. She was thrown off and sank to the shoulders in mud, unable to extricate herself. Fortunately, one of the government officials, who saw the accident, came to the spot and assisted her to get out, all besmeared. He directed an Indian who was coming near with a pail of water to throw its contents on her head, which he did. Remounting, she overtook the other Sisters who, after a little time, were obliged to separate.

As each mule chose his own route, and as it was impossible to procure more than one guide, they were forced to trust to the sagacity of these animals, which sometimes carried them up steep precipices and then through the dense woods that at this time covered the Isthmus.

After some hours, Mother Mary Xavier and Sister Mary Teresa found themselves on the banks of the Chagres river. Looking around for some track or road to guide them they descried amongst the trees a half-clad red-man in the distance. He was looking at them and yelling, either with surprise or anger. The Sisters were terrified. Suddenly, the providence of God came to their aid; in the distance they perceived some of the travelers advancing towards them, who, with loud cries of "Come on, Sisters! Plunge into the river!" encouraged them to attempt crossing. Both Sisters expecting death every moment, recommended their souls to God; and Sister Mary Teresa, leading the way, forced her mule into the water. The terror of these moments was so great that they knew not whether the mules trod on the bed of the river or swam. But great was their gratitude to God when they found themselves landed safely on the opposite bank, though wet through and through. They continued their journey, however, heedless of their distressing situation.

These two Sisters were the first to reach the city of Panama, where they looked with fearful anxiety towards the woods for the

other nuns, who joined them before darkness set in. During the dreadful ride they were without refreshment, all day under the scorching rays of a tropical sun, exposed to wild beasts, and, still worse, to the Indians watching to waylay travellers. Now they find themselves in a strange city, not knowing where to look for shelter or assistance. At this critical moment a strange gentleman, named Du Quesne, seeing the Sisters alone in the streets, came and politely offered his services. He conducted them to the Bishop's house, where they were received by his Lordship with much kindness and hospitality. After resting awhile they retired for the night to a sort of open or unfurnished house, where the Bishop directed them to lodge. Next morning his Lordship paid them an early and unexpected visit. He treated the nuns with truly paternal kindness, spoke encouragingly and took a lively interest in all that regarded their comfort and safety. Gladly would he have retained them in his diocese, had they not been pre-engaged.

At nine o'clock A. M. they were told that the steamer for California would sail at 11 A. M. Their habits—which, owing to the tropical rain, had been covered with mud while crossing the Isthmus—they had placed in the laundry to be washed; and now the notice is so short, and as they cannot have access to their trunks, they have no resource but to wring out their habits and put them on, dripping wet. The last difficulty of "crossing the Isthmus" had then to be encountered. No wharf having been yet constructed, in order to reach the steamer they must either go on foot through the water or allow themselves to be carried in the arms of the brawny Indians, who waded through the surf, each depositing his burden on the small boat destined to convey them to the steamer. The poor Sisters were forced to submit to the latter alternative

CHAPTER V.

The First Presentation Convent in the United States.

AFTER an agreeable voyage of thirteen days the Sisters arrived in San Francisco, where "they were cordially welcomed by the ecclesiastical authorities and laity, without distinction of creed; but they were somewhat disheartened at finding that there was no suitable conventual establishment prepared for their reception." His Grace, Most Rev. Archbishop Alemany, however, encouraged and consoled them with much paternity, and in the course of a few weeks established them temporarily in a small house in Green street. There they opened school on the 1st of December, 1854, and soon had an attendance of 200 children; but so limited were they in space in their "shanty," that they had to teach on the stairs and lobby, and even in a small yard twenty feet square, their only recreation ground. Many were the privations of the Sisters in these early times, when the city was only beginning to be "laid out;" oftentimes were they in want of common necessaries, while their cloisters concealed them from the inhabitants. By degrees Divine Providence raised up benefactors to aid them. Among the first of these was Rev. J. F. Harrington, who showed the Sisters much kindness; and Mr. Patrick Fenton, who, besides substantially aiding the new community himself, enlisted also the sympathies of many other kind friends. The number of pupils attending the Sisters' schools increased more and more, and the people of the Parish, being pleased with the improvement of their

Presentation Convent, Powell Street, San Francisco

children, soon formed a society of gentlemen to maintain the community and build a convent, the principal members of which were, the Hon. Judge Robert J. Tobin; his brother, Mr. Richard Tobin; Mr. Peter Chrystal, Mr. F. Buckley, Dr. P. M. O'Brien, Messrs. John and Patrick Dunn, and Mr. Myles D. Sweeny. Later, Mr. John Sullivan became a generous benefactor to the community. A lot was now chosen for the building of the new convent. Rev. Father Harrington and Mr. John Sullivan, being the first names on the list of subscribers, generously contributed $1,000 each. The building was commenced on the 10th of August, 1855. Whilst it was in course of erection, the Sisters of Midleton, discouraged from the beginning by the crosses and trials of their new mission, (which are detailed in the Annals of the Order, but do not enter into the subject of our present brief sketch), and Mother Mary Joseph being in feeble health, determined on returning home. The Archbishop, however, considering that the Presentation Order would be a serious loss to the spiritual welfare of the poor children, who at that time had few educational advantages and had wonderfully improved under the meek training of the Sisters, earnestly requested Sister Mary Teresa Comerford to remain. Being the youngest of the missioners and dreading responsibilities, though she never faltered at difficulties encountered in doing God's work when guided by obedience, she answered: "My Lord, as the other Sisters are leaving, I prefer returning with them." His Grace then entreated her to continue the work which had been commenced by the disposition of Divine Providence, promising to support her with his episcopal patronage, etc., and never to interfere with their holy Rule. In a spirit of obedience she finally consented to remain, and, at her request, Sister Mary Xavier

Daly "volunteered for the same glorious mission" and continued for years her faithful auxiliary and co-laborer.

A postulant named Miss Cassian, who had entered the previous October, proved a great blessing to these two valiant souls.

On the 8th of November, 1855, Mother Mary Teresa Comerford, as we shall henceforth call her, was formally appointed Superioress. Feeling that her new task was of God's imposing, she assumed her responsible duties with all zeal and energy, accompanied with that humble diffidence in self which, joined to reliance on the Divine assistance, marks the true servant of God. Some time previous to the return of Mother Mary Joseph Cronin and Mother Mary Augustine, who had sailed for Panama on the 5th of November, Dr. O'Brien, Superintendent of Public Schools, through his influence obtained for the Sisters from the Board of Education the sum of $100 per month. When Mother Mary Teresa was about two months Superior, the officers of the Board were changed, and the Sisters were asked to appear in the City Hall to submit to examination and have their schools visited by public officers. But the courageous Superior replied that since these requirements were not in keeping with their religious state, they were ready to make any pecuniary sacrifice rather than submit to them. In the absence of the Archbishop on a distant visitation of his extensive diocese, a clergyman, more zealous than prudent, urged her to compliance with these demands of the Board of Education, telling her that circumstances were sufficient to exempt them from enclosure. Faithful to the spirit of her vocation, she positively refused, emphatically saying: "We are ready to return to Ireland rather than act against conscience." He then tried to compel her to relinquish her desire to enforce the rule on this point. Being piqued at her refusal, he

said that, in the absence of the Archbishop, he would command her to comply; and she calmly replied to him: "I do not consider your authority sufficient, and cannot act according to your directions without due dispensation from the Holy See." Her praiseworthy firmness created many trying contrarieties for the time, which she bore with her usual calmness; when suddenly the Archbishop returned, and, becoming aware of what had taken place, his Grace hastened to the Convent, reassuring the Sisters, to their great consolation, of his fatherly protection. The building of the new convent went on so rapidly that Mother Mary Teresa hoped to remove thither on the 3rd of December, the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, to whom, as we related before, she had a particular devotion. Besides, if the Sisters remained one day beyond that date in the house then occupied by them, they would have to pay $120. The upper part only of the new building was habitable, the lower part being still in the workmen's hands, having neither doors, windows or stairs. Notwithstanding these inconveniences, and much opposition on the part of friends who feared for the health and safety of the Sisters, the zealous determination of Mother Mary Teresa prevailed. Accordingly, at 6½, P. M., a carriage conveyed the Sisters to their new home, where they were welcomed by Rev. J. F. Harrington and other friends. The gentlemen benefactors of the community, who were from amongst the most wealthy and distinguished of the citizens of San Francisco, on this occasion gave an example of charity rarely met with. They condescended, at that advanced hour, to carry the Sisters' furniture and other requisites through the streets from their late residence—no easy task in the "rainy season," at a time when streets were neither graded nor lighted, the city being only in its infancy. Mother Mary Teresa's gratitude to God was indeed very great,

when she found herself within her new cloister ; and setting aside every consideration as to the rest required after the fatigue of that memorable day in the annals of Powell street, as soon as Rev. John Harrington and the other kind friends withdrew, she proceeded to erect an altar for the celebration of Holy Mass. The good Archbishop, with fatherly kindness, came next morning, at 5 o'clock. He was received by the nuns and conducted to their little temporary chapel, where, assisted by Rev. Father Harrington, His Grace celebrated the first Mass in the new Convent, on December 4th, 1855. Then the most Holy Sacrament was, with great respect, deposited in the neat little tabernacle.

Such was the humble commencement of the first Presentation Convent on the Continent of America. And it is easy to recognize the hand of Providence in the succession of events and circumstances which concurred to prepare its foundress, Mother Mary Teresa Comerford, for her glorious mission. In the school of the Cross, and by the salutary trials of contradictions, privations and disappointments, her holy soul was trained for the accomplishment of God's design in the establishment, in the Far West, of the useful educational Order of which she was a worthy member.

CHAPTER VI.

Opening of the Powell Street Schools.

IN January, 1856, the schools of the Presentation Convent' Powell street, were first opened. A numerous attendance of pupils gave great encouragement to Mother Mary Teresa Comerford and her assistants, whose success as efficient and gentle teachers became so manifest that children of every religious denomination and social rank sought admission into their classes. At this period the friends of the Community "urged them to accept payment from the pupils who could afford it;" but Mother Mary Teresa, reposing her confidence in the goodness of God for the providing of the material as well as the spiritual means to perpetuate *His own work*, and wishing to maintain the spirit and practice of her holy rules, resolutely declined to make any charge.

Her wise firmness in this instance was so consonant with the ideas of the "liberty-loving Californians," (to whom she knew an invidious distinction would be distasteful), that a few years later it was necessary to build an additional class-room, owing to the great increase of pupils. And up to this time the four Communities founded by Mother Mary Teresa still retain their schools *entirely free*, notwithstanding many pecuniary difficulties which might seem to warrant an exemption from the rule in this country.

Meanwhile, the building-debt was gradually liquidated by means of Fairs and other resources created by the energy and influence of Mother Mary Teresa. She had always had a special devotion to the Sacred Heart, and in this pious attraction was the secret of her success. Placing her whole confidence in Its

bounty, she commenced to raise funds for the erection of the new schools already referred to. Her hope was not in vain. A meeting of gentlemen was assembled, presided over by the Archbishop, and before it terminated $4,000 were contributed. Mr. Daniel T. Murphy, the late Mr. James Donahue and Mr. John Sullivan loaned $3,000 each, without interest, besides giving as their subscriptions $250 each. The two first-named gentlemen finally donated their loan to the Convent. The building was completed by the Spring of 1860, and soon again, through the tact and prudence of Mother Mary Teresa, debts contracted in its erection were entirely cancelled; and, encouraged by her zealous Community, she directed her attention towards providing a school for the negro children of San Francisco. After a few months trial, however, this project proved impracticable, as it alienated the white pupils, whose parents refused to send them to the Convent should the blacks continue to attend. This, with other obstacles, rendered it advisable to convert the class-room used for the negroes into a school for infant boys. This change proved very advantageous, the school and yard being separated from the girls; boys were retained until they were fully instructed for the reception of the sacraments. Many instances could be given of the perseverance of those boys until manhood in the pious practice learned at the Convent School. If God has promised to reward even "a cup of cold water given in his name," how much brighter will be the recompense of those who provide immortal souls with their aliment in contributing to establish Catholic schools for their instruction; and, surely, the unprecedented munificence of the gentlemen who aided Mother Mary Teresa with their ample subscriptions must excite in others feelings of respect and admiration and stimulate them to do likewise for the "greater glory of God."

CHAPTER VII.

Mother Mary Teresa Visits her Native Land.

IN the preceding chapter we have seen how God favored the establishment of the Presentation Convent schools. The great increase of pupils necessarily demanded an increase of teachers, and volunteers for the San Francisco mission offered to come to the field of labor. In 1856, Mothers Mary Magdalene Gore and Mary Ursula O'Callaghan arrived from the Presentation Convent, Kilkenny. Soon after their arrival Miss Cassian, the first postulant already mentioned, made her solemn profession, assuming the name of Sister Mary Joseph. This young lady was the first Presentation nun professed on the Continent of America. In the year 1860, Mother Mary Bernard Comerford, younger sister of Mother Mary Teresa, who had always cherished a desire for the foreign mission, came from the Presentation Convent, Midleton, under the escort of Right Rev. Dr. O'Connell, Bishop of Marysville. Other young ladies, following the example of Miss Cassian, entered the novitiate, and Mother Mary Teresa filled the double office of Superior and Mistress of Novices—duties for which she seemed admirably qualified, and of which she acquitted herself with great credit. As Superior, she was beloved and respected by her Community, and her kindness of heart, joined to a gentle firmness and energy of will, led all to obey with pleasure and alacrity. As Mistress of Novices, she possessed a clear insight into the dispositions and attractions of souls—patience,

self-control, and a sympathising spirit, which led beginners in religious life to filial confidence in, and loving obedience to her directions. This confiding and submission to Superiors she always inculcated in her instructions to them, knowing that these virtues are supereminently essential to happiness and perfection in the religious life. But she corrected and trained her subjects more by the influence of what she was than by what she did.

Amidst the pressing occupations of her double office, and the anxieties attending the erection and organization of new schools, which were so calculated to create distractions and solicitudes of a perplexing nature, she seemed content and happy everywhere, because she referred all to the glory of God. Her amiable disposition, graciousness of manner and wise decisions led many seculars to the Convent to seek counsel or consolation, on which occasions her almost irresistible influence in promoting the good of souls was fruitful in results for their spiritual welfare, and often for their temporal advantage. After many years of toil and in face of opposition of every kind, she at length saw the Powell-street Convent firmly established and the conventual discipline so perfect that a holy dignitary, well acquainted with the nuns, pointed out that Convent as the "abode of the spirit of God." The schools were in a flourishing condition, and Heaven manifested its approval of the foundation by the spiritual and temporal blessings bestowed on the Community. Undismayed by the series of trials through which she had passed in the establishment of her first Convent, and becoming better acquainted with the necessity of religious instructions for the children of San Francisco, her ardent zeal inspired her to promote the glory of God and the welfare of her Community by undertaking the foundation of another Convent in San Francisco. In this she was greatly en-

couraged by the Jesuit Fathers, who had, from the beginning, evinced a holy interest in the Presentation mission, and now earnestly desired her to found a home at the southern end of the city, where a good convent school was much needed. After much prayer and consulting holy and experienced persons, the new foundation was set on foot. With the munificent donation of $20,000 from Mr. Daniel T. Murphy, and contributions from Mr. Michael J. O'Connor and Mr. Joseph A. Donohoe and Mr. John Sullivan, a lot was purchased on the corner of Taylor and Ellis streets, which proved a most suitable location for a convent. While God was thus favoring her new project, He was also preparing a new trial for herself and her Community. In the fall of 1866, Mother Mary Teresa was attacked by a serious illness; physicians declared her life in imminent danger, and ordered a sea voyage, as the only hope of restoration. His Grace the Archbishop, anxious to preserve so precious a life, permitted no delay in complying with this recommendation of the doctors, and accordingly, on the 19th of January, 1867, Mother Mary Teresa, accompanied by her faithful companion, Mother Mary Xavier Daly, left San Francisco for Ireland. The friends of the Community having previously heard of the intended departure of Mother Mary Teresa, flocked to the Convent to receive a parting word from their friend and consoler, and were liberal in their gifts to the travelers. One gentleman sent $1,000, whilst two others paid all the expenses of the journey. The sorrow of the Community at parting with their beloved Foundress, under such trying circumstances, was very great; and as she loved all her nuns tenderly, this separation was very sensibly felt by her. The two travelers had a prosperous voyage, and, arriving in Ireland, they proceeded to the Presentation Convent, Midleton. There Mother Mary Teresa

became dangerously ill; but, by the kind care of the nuns of this Community, she gradually grew better, and, after a few weeks, was able to remove to Kilkenny Convent, where she was cordially welcomed by the Sisters.

The special object of this visit to her native place was to obtain the medical assistance of her esteemed brother, Dr. Edmund H. Comerford, an eminent physician. Under his skilful care her failing health was almost completely restored. Whilst at this convent, which was so dear to her as having been the place of her entrance into religion, her reception and profession, and in whose peaceful seclusion she had passed the first thirteen years of her religious life, she had the great consolation to meet her venerable father, then in his 82d year. She felt the greatest love and reverence for this dear parent, whose noble life merited the honor and respect, not alone of his children, but of all who knew him; and great was the joy of the happy father to behold once more his favorite daughter. By a happy coincidence her brother, Very Rev. Pierce Michael Comerford, D. D., Vicar-General of Mauritius,* happened at this time to be in Ireland, and came to see his sister when she arrived in Kilkenny. This interview was a desirable one for Mother Mary Teresa, not merely because they were brother and sister, for long ago each had accepted the call of the Lord to "leave all and follow Him," in an apostolic vocation to distant missions, and, we might add, to opposite extremities of the globe. But well might souls such as these seek each other, that their mutual sympathy might lead to more ardent aspirations after eternal happiness and the self-sacrifice that attains it. This distinguished ecclesiastic gave her much encouragement, and exerted himself to enlist young subjects of refined education for the San Fran-

*A few years previous this worthy priest declined the Bishopric of the Mauritius, to which the Holy See had nominated him with the title of Bishop of Migara

cisco Convent. Dr. Edmund H. Comerford's noble generosity on this occasion was also of great service to his sister's mission in the Far West. Her health having been re-established, she prepared for her return to California, having succeeded in getting accomplished young ladies to accompany her as postulants, who were subsequently of great assistance to the Communities here, as vocations to the "Cloistered teaching Orders" are rare in America. Her relations and friends would gladly have retained her in her native land, but her heart was in the labors of the Foreign Missions, and thence she would return. During her absence, death deprived her of one of her dearest religious. This was Sister Mary Joseph Cassian, her first postulant, and the first nun trained under her gentle sway and the first professed in Powell street Convent. She was fondly cherished by Mother Mary Teresa, because of her many virtues and sterling qualities, which were thus briefly recorded at the time of her decease:

"From the time of her profession, in 1858, till the beginning of her last illness, seven years later, Sister Mary Joseph labored with unsurpassed zeal and assiduity in the education of the children committed to the care of the Order, and was conspicuous for a gentle and tender charity which endeared her to all. Her observance of rules, her simplicity of character, her obedience to superiors, her exactness in the performance of duties, her tender love of the state of perfection which she had embraced, were virtues which shone with extraordinary purity and brightness in the deceased religious. The peace and consolation of the last hours of the Sister's life were such as might be expected from one who had served God so faithfully. Her sufferings seemed a joy to her; the rewards of another life seemed rather an object of vision than of hope; and she prayed, upon learning that her dissolution was near at hand, that she might be

freed from the bonds of this world, to celebrate the approaching feast of Saint Peter (February 22d) in heaven. The prayer was granted—Sister Mary Joseph died on the eve of that feast."*

On the day on which Sister Mary Joseph died, Mother Mary Teresa was sailing on the waves of the Atlantic, but she had a presentiment, nay, a conviction, that her child in California had expired, and said emphatically to a person near her, "Mary Joseph is dead." The sorrow for the loss of this dear child was soothed by the hope of her happiness, as the reward of her pure and useful life.

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*S. F. *Monitor*.

Sacred Heart Presentation Convent Taylor St. San Francisco.

CHAPTER VIII.

Foundation of Taylor Street Convent.

AFTER an absence of nearly five months, Mother Mary Teresa and Mother Mary Xavier, with their band of postulants, arrived in San Francisco on the 24th January, 1867. The joy of the Community in Powell street on this occasion exceeds description. From an early hour in the morning Mother Mary Bernard Comerford, who acted as Superior in the absence of her sister, had sent escorts to await the arrival of the steamer from Panama, and every manifestation of gladness which gratitude and affection could suggest was availed of by the nuns to welcome their beloved Foundress and her companion. The pupils shared the sentiment of their religious teachers, and vied with each other in similar demonstrations of welcome. The warmth of Mother Mary Teresa's affection for her children reciprocated all their filial devotedness, and she repaid their fondness by new tokens of her maternal love. Her health being now fully restored, she allowed herself no rest, and soon commenced preparations for her second foundation.

On 26th September, 1868, the corner stone of the new Convent was laid, the plans of the building having been previously sanctioned by her. And here we may observe, her architectural tastes were very remarkable. She re-copied the plans of her Convent and modified them with as much skill as judgment. Whilst the building was in course of erection, our beloved Foundress, accompanied by Mother Mary Xavier, visited it to see

if all was in keeping with her conventual views for the new establishment. The building was completed by May, 1869. Eight Sisters for the new foundation were then selected, and his Grace Archbishop Alemany appointed Mother Mary Teresa Comerford Superioress of the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent. She knew, from experience, the weight of the burden imposed on her, but accepted it as coming from the hands of God, who had so bountifully aided her to bear the trials of that same office for twelve consecutive years in her first foundation. Like the saints, she was far from soliciting or assuming the missions for which Providence destined her ; she rather shrank from them, and it was with a deep sense of her own unworthiness, and not without reluctance, she humbly submitted to bear the responsibility of the double office of Superior and Mistress of Novices to the end of her life.

The Vigil of Pentecost, which, in that year, occurred on the 15th May, was the day selected for the departure of the missioners. Presentation nuns, on account of their strict inclosure, feel a separation very sensibly; and who will be surprised at this when we read in the Annals of Citeaux that "tears streamed from the eyes of the monks, and sobs broke forth from their breasts" when Saint Bernard led his first foundation to Clairveaux? On this occasion the exodus of missionaries was peculiarly trying for those who remained behind, and felt that they were parting with their beloved Foundress, perhaps forever. After Mass, the Community assembled to bid farewell. All were eager to get a last advice and a last blessing from Mother Mary Teresa, who, in her missionary spirit, went courageously through the partings with an encouraging word to every one, though feeling deeply this separation from the nuns and the house she so tenderly loved. She followed her companions to the carriages

which awaited them. His Grace the Archbishop, his Vicar-General, Very Rev. Father Croke, three other clergymen, and some distinguished friends of the Community, accompanied the nuns to Taylor street, and, as the carriages drove through the city, they resembled a religious procession. When they arrived at the convent they were met by numerous friends who welcomed them to their new home.

The new Community having received the Archbishop's blessing and the congratulations of the clergy, the assembly dispersed, and Mother Mary Teresa immediately set the Sisters to work to prepare for the dedication of the convent, which was to take place next day, the Feast of Pentecost. Previous to the removal of the missioners the benevolent Mr. Daniel T. Murphy, (now honored with the title of "Marquis" by favor of the Holy See), brought from Rome and presented to Mother Mary Teresa for the next convent two magnificent oil paintings. They were life-size copies from the Old Masters, representing "The Annunciation" and the "Last Communion of St. Jerome." The nuns were surprised to find that kind benefactors, too, had already provided the house with useful articles of furniture, and some fine pictures. But there was no altar at which the Mass and other ceremonies of the coming feast could be celebrated. The chapel was large and beautiful but not in a condition to receive the expected congregation, nor was there a choir for the nuns. They were obliged to carry away portions of the scaffolding and other working materials left by the mechanics in different parts of the building, to clean the room from mortar, and erect a temporary altar. Mother Mary Teresa was everywhere, directing, assisting and cheering the Sisters. They worked till midnight, scarcely giving themselves time to take the frugal refreshment that the fast of the

vigil permitted. Next morning they rose unusually early, and were fully prepared for the clergyman sent by the Archbishop as his substitute to bless the altar and celebrate Mass, previous to the ceremony of Dedication. The Holy Sacrifice was offered, and again did Mother Mary Teresa, like her holy patronesss, rejoice that the Most Blessed Sacrament reposed in another sanctuary and was worshipped in a new temple. The consolation this afforded her made her easily forget the labor and anxieties attendant on the raising of the magnificent structure which was that day to be solemnly dedicated under the title of her own choosing, the "Sacred Heart Presentation Convent."

At 2 P. M. the ceremony of Dedication was commenced by His Grace the Most Rev. Archbishop, assisted by Right Rev. Thaddeus Amat, Bishop of Monterey. In the procession were twelve priests and a number of practised acolytes. The pupils of Powell street Presentation Convent, who had been previously trained by the nuns, composed the choir for the occasion, the Rev. John Valentini, a faithful friend of the Presentation nuns, acting as organist, or rather pianist; for there was no organ till the pupils presented a very fine one to Mother Mary Teresa on the celebration of her holy Patroness' Feast Day, the 15th of October, 1869. The congregation of the faithful who assembled to witness the ceremony was so great that every apartment, and even the piazza in the vicinity of the chapel, was occupied. The nuns gave up their places and took refuge from the crowd behind the altar. The sacred ceremony of blessing the convent concluded with an impressive discourse that proved to the people the great blessing they had received that day in the founding of a convent whose inmates would be the devoted teachers of their children for generations to come. After the sermon a large collection was taken up, which clearly manifested

that the audience duly appreciated the self-sacrificing efforts of the Daughters of the saintly Nano Nagle in the cause of Christian education.

Mother Mary Teresa, allowing herself no rest in her new house save the moments she spent before the Tabernacle, now turned her attention to the internal direction of her Community and the preparations for the opening of the schools. As the nuns were obliged to give the first week to cleaning and arranging the house, the schools were not opened till the 24th of May, Feast of Our Lady, Help of Christians. On that day nearly four hundred children were admitted. The number continued to increase beyond all expectation, and the two extensive rooms already prepared for them no longer afforded sufficient accommodation. By the 2nd of June, pupils had become so numerous it was found necessary to give up the chapel for a school, the refectory being converted into an Infant School, and every available spot applied to school purposes, each sister having nearly one hundred children to teach. This large attendance was attributed to Mother Mary Teresa's having placed the commencement of the schools under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, to whom she was singularly devout. She now saw the imperative necessity of additional school-room, many children having been denied admission, owing to the impossibility of accommodating them. Mother Mary Teresa, it would seem, must have exhausted every pecuniary resource in the building already erected; but that courage (superior to most of her sex) with which nature had gifted her she elevated to a virtue; and, placing all her confidence in God, she commenced a Novena to the Sacred Heart, to obtain means for enlarging the schools, that she might receive all the little ones who presented themselves.

When the Archbishop was asked for leave to build, and having considered the matter, his Grace granted the petition, sent a letter to Mother Mary Teresa with permission for a Fair and collection. The new schools were rapidly built and were ready for the pupils by January, 1870, so that the nuns who had used the community room as a choir for the past seven months were now able to return to their beautiful chapel.

A saint tells us in one of her writings that those who do something for God are sure to be rewarded with a portion of His Cross; and soon the blessings which were bestowed on the new foundation were followed by salutary afflictions. The harvest was now rich but the laborers were few. Mother Mary Teresa's prayer that "the Lord would send laborers into his vineyard" was quickly answered. Two young ladies from "Kildare's Holy Shrine," sisters to Rev. Father Cooper, joined the community. Their elder sister had a few years preceded them. All three were efficient and gentle teachers; but the Angel of Death seemed to have marked them for his victims from the beginning of their religious life. Sister Mary Evangelist, the second of these young ladies, became ill in six months after her arrival in California and one week from her reception as a novice. During her postulation she manifested great sweetness and amiability. Her purity of conscience was such that Mother Mary Teresa, in speaking of her, would say: "I felt humbled to have the direction of such an angelic soul." The Mother Foundress' grief at this bereavement was deep, as she had hoped this holy religious would prove a bright example and useful auxiliary in the young community. But those who witnessed the gentle patience and calm resignation of the fervent novice assured her that if she lost a treasure on earth she had gained an intercession in heaven. Everything that maternal

affection could suggest was done to preserve the life of this dear child by Mother Mary Teresa ; but rapid consumption had already carried its ravages beyond the power of medical skill. and Sister Mary Evangelist breathed forth her pure soul to God on the 1st of March, 1870, at the early age of eighteen years. She was scarcely laid in the tomb when it became painfully evident that her sister, Mary Patricia, would soon be called to follow her. She rallied, however, and was sent to Powell street Convent, in the hope that the change might still further improve her health. But she was destined never to return to Taylor street. This child was only fifteen when she joined the novitiate. Highly talented and of a very cheerful disposition, she bore her tedious illness with edifying patience. Her wish was to die young, and she manifested a holy envy that her sister should have "got her crown before *her*." By special dispensation she was professed one year after reception. From that time she sighed still more earnestly for her release, and a few months later, fortified by all the consolations which the Church affords to her departing children, she was summoned to the reward of her innocent life.

CHAPTER IX.

Continuation of Taylor Street Mission.

THE year 1870 brought many trials to Mother Mary Teresa. The loss of young subjects, from death and other causes—temporal difficulties, too, with many perplexing cares—occasioned her much anxiety. In these afflictions she sought consolation in the Divine Heart of Jesus, for which, as we before remarked, she had a deep devotion. Neither obstacles nor contradictions could shake her confidence in Its goodness. In every necessity It became her resource, and her trust was amply rewarded. A Novena was commenced to the Sacred Heart that substitutes might be sent for the departed Sisters; and ere its close a letter was received from an eminent Jesuit in Dublin, stating that he had made arrangements with a professed Sister from a convent in the suburbs and two young postulants to leave for San Francisco. They came soon after under the care of the Rev. Mother's intimate and esteemed friend, Right Rev. Eugene O'Connell, Bishop of Marysville, who was just then returning from the Vatican Council. His Lordship showed them every kindness and attention, from Dublin to California. This worthy prelate gave Mother Mary Teresa many other testimonies of his paternal interest in her missions, which are recorded elsewhere. Towards the close of this year she received the sad announcement of her venerable father's death at the patriarchal age of 85. She felt this new trial keenly. But three years since she had knelt to receive his blessing, which he gave from the fulness of a paternal heart, whose affection for his

favorite daughter had not been chilled by either time or distance. Nor did he forget her on his death-bed, for his attendants heard him call "Bridget, Bridget, the child I loved!" and the old man wept. His death, like his life, was that of a most edifying Christian; and fittingly was it said of him that "he transmitted his truly Catholic sentiments to his numerous children, who, at home and in foreign countries, may justly feel proud of his memory. Mother Mary Teresa calmly offered this new sacrifice at the foot of the altar where she poured forth her sorrow in fervent supplications for the repose of her dead father's soul.

The year 1871 began under more favorable auspices than the preceding one. The princely benefactor of the Taylor street Convent, Sir Daniel Murphy, paying another visit to the Eternal City, had purchased a magnificent set of altar vessels and church ornaments, which reached San Francisco on Easter Monday. Every thing that contributed to the beauty of God's home gave real pleasure to Mother Mary Teresa, and great was her joy when these handsome Easter gifts were presented to her, which she had immediately blessed and used on the altar of the reception of two novices the next day. "I am glad," she would repeat, "that our dear Lord has something more worthy of His sacred service now."

Two months later she was much consoled by the arrival from Ireland of another professed religious from the convent alluded to in the beginning of this chapter. She was accompanied by four young ladies, whose entrance into the novitiate was a great benefit to the schools, as they eventually proved to be accomplished and successful teachers. Other young ladies from San Francisco joined the novitiate, soon after which increased the maternal cares of Mother Mary Teresa. Besides, whilst the sisters were occupied in the schools, she was busily engaged

with the instruction of adults, and in preparing for the sacraments children who were not pupils of the convent school; or, again, instructing converts for baptism, some of whom received the sacrament of regeneration in the convent chapel. These multiplied engagements did not prevent her frequently visiting the schools to see that all was carried out there in the spirit of the Rule, and with profit to the children. In the fall of this year her health became very much impaired, and, after a few weeks, physicians considered an immediate change of air the only remedy to ensure restoration. This was a severe trial to the still young Community, who dearly loved their excellent Superior. Yet they felt no sacrifice was too great to prolong a life so precious and so essential to the welfare of the Institution. Therefore, having obtained the Archbishop's permission, she left for the Convent of Notre Dame, San José. She was accompanied by a Sister from Powell street, who was then in delicate health, which prompted the maternal kindness of the Foundress to select *her* as a companion, that she might also be restored. Rev. Mother Teresa, the Superior-General of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, then on a visitation of her convent in Oregon and Oakland, was the guest of the Sisters of Notre Dame at this time, too. The spiritual and cheerful society of this venerable religious, together with her kind attentions and those of the good Sisters of Notre Dame, contributed much to hasten the physical improvement of Mother Mary Teresa Comerford. Her letters to Taylor street, though few, were expressive of her affectionate solicitude for her absent children, who treasured every line as valuable souvenirs, each trying to get a portion of the little missive from the actual recipient. After a few weeks she returned, though not quite well, for her desire to be in the midst of her own Community overruled the taking of necessary

relaxation. On her arrival, her religious felt and manifested as much joy at again embracing their beloved Superioress as if she had been years absent. She immediately resumed her arduous duties, and, not least of those, was her directing the erection of a magnificent and expensive marble altar which had been just sent her from Rome by a liberal benefactor, Mr. George Conroy. A devoted client of Mary and an ardent lover of the Order which takes its name from the Presentation of Mary in the temple, Mother Mary Teresa was all eagerness to do homage to "our Immaculate Lady," by having this beautiful monument of her friend's generosity ready for the offering of the holy sacrifice on the 21st of November, the day on which the Church celebrates the Feast of our Lady's Presentation ; and she attained her desire. Some months later, the benevolent donor of the altar, who watched its erection with zealous care, and seemed justly proud of his offering to the chapel of the Sacred Heart, died after a few day's illness. A solemn requiem Mass was celebrated at this altar for his "happy repose." Mother Mary Teresa never allowed her Community to forget offering their prayers and Holy Communions for the same intention on the anniversary day of his death. She always remembered a favor bestowed, and the spirit of gratitude she encouraged in her religious ; for she considered that noble quality of the heart as the offspring of a virtuous soul. Alive or dead, her benefactors were never forgotten. When the marble altar was consecrated by his Grace Archbishop Alemany, her ardent soul, so appreciative of the solemnities of our holy religion, was deeply impressed by the imposing ceremony, and she would sometimes say: "Since the consecration of the altar by the holy Archbishop, I cannot help feeling that the majesty of the mos Sacred Trinity dwells in our little chapel."

In the beginning of the year 1873, Mother Mary Teresa's zeal to promote the glory of God led her to have the Association of the Apostleship of Prayer established in the Sacred Heart Convent, the members being the pious ladies of the city who assembled in one of the convent reception rooms every first Friday of the month. The meetings terminated with Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament, and an instruction given by Rev. Michael Accolti, S. J., of happy memory, who was an old and venerated friend of Mother Mary Teresa. Soon, however, the death-roll of her esteemed family was again to be unfolded to receive the name of her youngest brother, Nicholas Comerford, Esq., of Killeen, who, on the day that his sister was laboring to propagate the Devotion to the Sacred Heart, was called to his eternal reward. "In the prime of life he had passed away, leaving a bereaved and beloved wife to mourn his premature demise, and leaving also a memory to his friends of as gentle and kindly a heart as ever throbbed in human breast." When this sad intelligence reached her one of the Sisters found her weeping before the tabernacle, obedient to the Rule of her Institute, which tells its members "in all their sufferings and afflictions to seek, at the foot of the altar, their comfort and consolation." She raised her tearful eyes and said: "Nicholas is dead. It is God's will. My child, write to N—— to get prayers for his repose."

The following March she had the Sodality of the Children of Mary established in the schools. The Most Rev. Archbishop appointed Very Rev. A. Masnata, S. J., Director of the Sodality. He received as members nine young ladies, who were the first graduates from the Institution, and the most edifying children from the other classes as aspirants. The fruit of this devotion among the pupils was so very marked that priest and people

visiting the convent would say: "We can easily distinguish your children in the streets by their modest and ladylike demeanor."

When Mother Mary Teresa attended their meetings or gave instructions, all listened in breathless silence. On the eves of the Festivals of the Holy Virgin, she assembled some hundreds of the pupils and gave them lengthened discourses on the prerogatives of their Holy Mother, always insisting on the imitation of her virtues as best calculated to win her protection. On these occasions she suffered from a painful delicacy in the throat; but her love of Our Lady and zeal for the salvation of the pupils hindered her yielding to the Sisters who had many affectionate disputes with her trying to prevail on her to allow herself some respite.

True devotion to Jesus Christ produces a filial devotion to the Church and its Visible Head, and Mother Mary Teresa was fervently devoted to both of these, and gave substantial proofs of it on more than one occasion. In the year 1870, when the world was rejoicing over the Jubilee of Pius IX., she was the first on the Pacific Coast to organize any public recognition of the great event. The account of the celebration of the Papal Jubilee in the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent will be found in the appendix. In the year 1873, Right Rev. Monsignor Kristoffy, Domestic Prelate of his Holiness, being in San Francisco, visited our schools many times, expressing his highest approbation of their organization and the proficiency of the pupils. At this time the loyal devotion of the Mother Foundress to Pius IX., and her sincere sympathy in his many sorrows, which deeply touched her, led her to avail of this dignitary's kindness, to send by him contributions to the "Peter's Pence" fund, which she collected herself from the pupils and others. With a delicacy of taste, all her own, she concealed the gold coins between the

leaves of an illuminated album, which was presented to his Holiness, with an address from the children. On its receipt, his Holiness sent his blessing to herself and Community, the formula of which is printed on parchment, signed by his Holiness' venerable hand. This special mark of the Holy Father's paternity she received with great joy, and said she felt it would be productive of many blessings. She labored to communicate her veneration for the Visible Head of the Church to her religious and pupils, and seldom left the schools without having elicited the sympathy of the children for the suffering Church and her persecuted Shepherd, exhorting them to fidelity to their holy religion, and begging their prayers for the conversion of its enemies.

CHAPTER X.

Trials and Deaths.

REV. Mother Mary Teresa's presentiment that the "Papal Benediction would be productive of blessings" was fully realized. The Community and novitiate increased beyond expectation, which supplied the schools with teachers for every literary branch and brought a large attendance of pupils; and many externs came for private lessons. She attached so much importance to the great duty of Teaching, that she afforded the Sisters every opportunity to fit themselves for the labors of the class-room. She could not brook the idea that any teachers should surpass in efficiency those who taught, not for mercenary views, but for the "Glory of God" and the salvation of souls. "My dear Sisters," she would say, "you have to account for the souls of these children, and you must do everything to promote their progress by teaching each branch well. For, as the enemies of religion hold forth intellectual baits to draw them from us, we must counteract their influence by the same means. But, while educating in the higher studies and accomplishments, keep ever in view that they are but the means, not the end of the Presentation Nuns' teaching, whose ultimate object is the preservation of the innocence of the souls of the dear little ones committed to your care and their eternal salvation."

In the Taylor-street Convent her many duties did not permit her to regularly attend class; but, as long as her health allowed, she superintended the examination and classification of pupils.

She was happy when she found her schools supplied with a sufficient staff of teachers, for she felt that if the intellectual development of the pupils were not carefully attended to, the nuns could not promote advantageously their religious training. "Everything you teach, teach well and often," was her maxim. "Have patience with the dear children, after the example of Jesus, who was never weary of repeating the same lessons to his disciples." Her visits to the Infant School were frequent. She loved to sit in the midst of "her little angels," and listen to their quaint answers to her many questions, which she afterwards related at recreation.

St. Alphonsus tells us that "it is by the patient endurance of ill health we weave a great part of the crown that God destines for us in heaven." God only knows what abundance of merits Mother Mary Teresa must have accumulated by patiently accepting her frequent illness. Scarcely had the year 1875 commenced when she had again to carry the cross of serious sickness, which, however, yielded to medical treatment after a few weeks. A more severe trial awaited her. The tomb, which was but a short time closed over her beloved brother, Nicholas, was again to open to receive the mortal remains of her estimable brother, Edmund H. Comerford, M. D. "He was, both in public and private life, one of those true Christian heroes, who, united with rare professional talents, exceptional virtue." Brilliant prospects seemed to foreshadow his earthly fame and fortune at the time that God called him, we trust, to never-ending bliss, on the 7th of January. In him our communities lost a kind friend and benefactor. The sad announcement did not reach his sister in California till the 29th of the same month, on which day the Most Rev. Archbishop was making his episcopal visitation of the convent, and the Sisters were consequently allowed a little extra recreation.

When Mother Mary Teresa received the mourning letter she deferred the opening of it till the afternoon, fearing it contained any notice that might cast a shadow on the festivity of the Community ; for the afflictions of this Mother, which she could not always succeed in concealing, were also the sorrows of her children. Great was her surprise and grief when she discovered that her dearly-beloved brother, who but a few weeks since was full of life and hope, had been summoned from amongst his kindred on earth to receive the reward of his exemplary life in heaven. Receiving, as was her custom, every tribulation as coming from the hand of God, she had recourse to prayer for the Divine assistance to bear this new trial, not only patiently but lovingly uniting her sorrows to those of the Sacred Heart. In her humility she attributed this affliction, as she did all others that befell her, to her sins. "It is the good God that is punishing my pride," she would say. "I must begin a new life."

The Community had by this time increased considerably in numbers, so that there was very little cell accommodation, some of the sisters being necessitated to carry their beds into a class-room at night and remove them in the morning. It became evident that additional sleeping-room should be provided. The Foundress appealed to the Mother of God for help, which was not slow in coming. On the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, she wrote to the Archbishop for permission to build, and the next day she received a favorable answer to her petition. But God willed to put his own seal on the work by sickness and death. The building was scarcely commenced when Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart, a former pupil and one of the first postulants of this new foundation, who had been ailing since Spring, now became dangerously ill. The maternal heart of the Mother Foundress was ingenious in devising means

to alleviate the sufferings of the dear child whose hectic blush and short cough told plainly she would soon fall a victim to hereditary consumption. She was constantly by her bed-side, soothing and encouraging the invalid, while at the same time she was careful to exclude everything that could distract or disturb a soul so near God, with whom alone she wished her dying religious to be occupied. And well did this dear child profit by the instructions and care of her venerated Superior. Though still young, she sighed for the moment of her dissolution, and, holding out her crucifix to the Sisters who visited her, she would repeat, "Behold my crucified Spouse! He is soon coming for me." On the 7th of September, the vigil of the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary's nativity, she sweetly expired in the arms of Mother Mary Teresa, while her Sisters surrounded her bed reciting the mid-day "Angelus."

The death of this dear young sister was a severe wound to the feelings of her kind Superioress, who loved all her children with the devotedness of a mother; but Sister Mary of the Sacred Heart's sincere humility and genuine piety, during the five years of her religious life, and the peace and holiness of her last moments, were a sad but real consolation. At this time Sister Mary Gertrude Cooper, whom she had lent to her former Foundation to fulfil the office of Mistress of Novices, was supposed to be near her departure to eternity; and we may learn from the following letter of Mother Teresa's how she felt this additional trial. We copy it verbatim.

"My dear Mother Gertrude:

"I am sorry to hear that you are in a dangerous illness; but God's holy will be done—He is a tender Father and knows what is for our greater good; and you, dear Mary Gertrude, should feel consoled at the recollection of the grace He gave

you to make the little sacrifice He demanded of you. You are in His hands; leave yourself at His disposal, life or death. Often remember that He *loves you* and will repay you abundantly for the little you have done for Him. My dear Mary Gertrude, my poor heart is now full of sorrow, and I would wish to sit by your bed and speak to you of the dear Sacred Hearts of Jesus, Mary and Joseph; but '*Fiat voluntas tua.*' However, count on my poor prayers. I'll be with you in spirit, and we can often meet in the Sacred Heart. I send you our manual of 'Perpetual Intercession,' and our little pictures, which I'll value more and more when it comes back. All unite in most affectionate love and assurance of earnest and frequent prayers for you, *dearest Mary Gertrude*, and for your intentions. I know I need not ask you to think of my poor soul.

"Adieu, dearest Mary Gertrude.

"All yours in the Sacred Heart,

"MARY TERESA COMERFORD."

In the midst of these sorrows she finds strength to rise under the cross and to cast herself with a confiding heart into the arms of Providence. Sister Mary Gertrude was spared another year. The building of the new addition already spoken of now occupied Mother Mary Teresa. It was quickly finished at the cost of $9,900. The funds were collected from private benefactors by the Foundress, and Mrs. John Mackey kindly presented a silver brick, the raffling of which realized nearly $1,000; thus enabling her to cancel all indebtedness.

In the fall of 1876 Mother Mary Teresa recalled Sister Mary Gertrude Cooper to the Sacred Heart Convent, as her delicate state of health unfitted her for the duty of Mistress of Novices. The change seemed to benefit her for awhile. The pupils were delighted to see their amiable teacher again, and eagerly testified

their joy at her return. Brief, however, was their rejoicing. As it frequently happens with the sick in the chill season of dull November, Sister Mary Gertrude again relapsed, and in a few days she was brought to the verge of the grave. In loving and tender language did the Mother Foundress soothe the last moments of the dying religious, constantly suggesting to her aspirations containing the holy name of Jesus, such as "My Jesus, mercy!" and passages from the Scripture, encouraging hope in the mercy of God. "I am thine; save me!" "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped. I shall not be confounded for ever!" This edifying and useful religious prepared for the awful passage from time to eternity with perfect tranquility. Her nights of racking pain were spent in thanking God for the grace of her vocation, and, above all, for the privilege of dying in the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent. She calmly expired at midnight on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, 1876. She was the last of Mother Teresa's religious children whom she should see die in the Sacred Heart Convent, and the last of the three Miss Coopers who had sacrificed everything to join the Foreign Mission. Mother Mary Teresa's feelings at this time came, as it were, in conflict. While her affection bade her mourn for her departed religious, her faith and love for God led her to rejoice that He had selected her dearest children to join the virgin band in Paradise; and thus she found it easy to yield her claim to keep them on earth when "He called them home."

We have seen the alternations of prosperity and adversity which she experienceu in establishing the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent. Such also were the vicissitudes, if we may so call them, of consolation and desolation within her holy soul, which, though generous and lofty in its aspirations, was yet humble and diffident of self.

At one period her deep sense of what seemed to her her own unworthiness led her to partake of the dereliction of her Divine Spouse. Referring to this time in after life she said to one of her favorite children: "Whilst in that state of aridity, my dear M——, I thought I should have died, so great were my interior sufferings." Yet, under the weight of this crushing agony, she was a model of religious perfection. Each point of the Rule was fulfilled with the greatest exactitude, and she gave to others encouragement and consolation, though deprived of every solace herself. Amid all her trials she loved God ardently with a deep and trustful love that thirsted to serve Him yet better, and which made her repeat with the "Model of Patience," "even though Thou shouldst kill me, I will hope in Thee still." It was by these trials that her virtue was perfected and her soul became more and more pleasing to God.

The Lord, who delights to make use of the humble to accomplish his ends, was soon to call her to new labors in his vineyard; and the Convent of the Sacred Heart will send forth its members to open new Seminaries for the religious and literary training of youth, as we shall soon learn.

CHAPTER XI.

Last Years in Taylor Street.

WE have seen in the preceding chapter how Mother Mary Teresa founded and matured the Convent of the Sacred Heart into a perfect Institute. Everything she planned and arranged for this establishment seemed to have been directed by a wonderful foresight. The schools were declared by tourists and others to be the most perfect in accommodation of any in the United States, while the proficiency of the pupils, as proved at the various examinations, seemed to take people by surprise. A contemporary, commenting on one of these examinations, writes: "They called forth a display of talent and taste which must have been highly gratifying to every one concerned. Visitors who, for the first time, witnessed examinations in the schools conducted by the good ladies of the Presentation, expressed their astonishment at the facilities which San Francisco offers to Catholic girls. It is, indeed, a consoling reflection for the Catholics of this city that there are ladies in our midst so capable of imparting a thorough secular education, interwoven with the beautiful truths of our holy religion. Never before was it our happiness to behold neater, more modest, amiable or happier-looking children than the pupils of the Presentation nuns. In vain may we search outside the Sisters' schools for that air of modest confidence, that amiable self-possession, that impress of innocence which play about the countenance and direct the movements of

the pupils. But why should it be otherwise? Who should be better adapted to train the youthful mind, by precept and example, in the ways that lead to happiness, than those who have abandoned the world and staked their salvation on the instruction of youth?"

Mother Mary Teresa was obliged, reluctantly, to submit to these public examinations of the pupils in order to manifest to the prejudiced minds of parents that secular education imparted in the Convents, if not superior to that given in the Public Schools, was fully equal to it, as had been proved more than once when the graduates of the former institution obtained first-class certificates as Public School teachers. On the occasion of public exhibition Mother Mary Teresa would say: "My dear Sister, it would, I know, be much easier for you and me to be occupied with God alone, content that He only would be the witness, and His pleasure the recompense of our labors in the school. Such however, is not His holy will. Shut yourselves up in the Sacred Heart, and Jesus will protect you and will bless your efforts for His glory."

Being as desirous as ever to extend her Institute, she was eager to found a convent in the suburbs. Various locations were proposed. She decided, however, on going to Berkeley; and the recently-appointed Pastor of that place, Rev. M. Gualco, encouraged her to do so, as he hoped the schools would provide his congregation a suitable place to hear Mass till a church should be built. Mr. Curtis and Mr. James Magee immediately offered lots for the building. As the property of the latter gentman was larger and in a good locality, his ground was accepted.

In the beginning of the year 1877, Mother Mary Teresa visited Berkeley and made preliminary arrangements for the erection of the convent. Like all the works of God, obstacles

arose to hinder the progress of the building, which were, however, ultimately removed through the kind interest taken in the Foundation by Rev. Michael King, Pastor of Oakland, an old and valued friend of the Presentation Convents. Accordingly, on the 27th of May, his Grace Archbishop Alemany, accompanied by many clergymen, proceeded to Berkeley to lay the corner-stone. The people's appreciation of the advantages derived from the gratuitous education of girls by the Presentation nuns was fully testified on the occasion.

Hundreds crossed the bay to witness the first public Catholic ceremony in Berkeley, and to give their contributions to this new undertaking of the revered Foundress, who had so "devotedly given her time and energies to the literary and moral training of female youth."

At 4.50, P. M., on this beautiful May evening, the congregation assembled in the open plain in Center Berkeley. Beside the venerable Archbishop might be seen a youth who had scarcely reached his teens. He wore a mason's apron of no coarser texture than white satin, beautifully ornamented with the aquerelle painting of the nuns. In his hand he held a silver trowel, with which he aided the Archbishop in the laying of the stone. This young gentleman was Joseph Donohoe, son of one of Mother Mary Teresa's most generous and faithful friends, Joseph A. Donohoe, Esq., of San Francisco, of whom we shall have occasion to speak again.

The ceremony having terminated, Rev. Brother Justin, President of St. Mary's College, San Francisco, delivered in the open air an eloquent address, which was substantially responded to by liberal donations towards the building expenses. The crowd dispersed as the orb of day was gathering his crimson rays into the placid waters of the Golden Gate. The building was

raised under the watchful eye of Mr. James Magee, who had the interest of a father in all that concerned its erection. His good wife encouraged him in his charity and had hoped to see a convent established; but she was called to her reward the week previous to the laying of the corner stone.

Meanwhile, Mother Mary Teresa was with indomitable energy collecting the funds to defray the expenses; and all this in the quiet seclusion of her cloister. Nor was she less active in investigating the progress of the building. Every week she received reliable reports as to the attention and efficiency of the mechanics engaged. Mrs. Margaret Lynch, of Virginia City, besides other kindnesses, gave a large contribution towards the building fund. Another good lady of San Francisco gave $1,000; and Mr. John Parrott loaned $1,500, without interest, while the good gentlemen already mentioned in the course of the Memoir contributed $250 each; so that soon she was enabled to cancel the indebtedness incurred by this new establishment.

The disinterested, whole-souled generosity with which her friends responded to this, her "last appeal" to San Francisco, elicited many grateful prayers from the devout Foundress for her benefactors. Berkeley, too, sent its subscriptions, as evidence of the joy of its good inhabitants to welcome to their midst, at a future day, Mother Mary Teresa and her "virgin band."

It was in the beginning of this year that the Saintly Pius IX. was called from his "earthly prison to the freedom of the elect." The news of his death sadly touched Mother Mary Teresa. Her devotion to the Church and filial reverence for the deceased Pontiff led her at once to offer her suffrages and those of the community for his repose, while at the same time she had frequent prayers recited that God might send a worthy successor

to this wonderful Vicar of Christ. Soon the election of Leo XIII. caused her to rejoice with the whole Church in the happy choice of the Conclave, and she assembled the community to chant a solemn *Te Deum* when the announcement reached her. In memory of the deceased Pope she designed a beautiful emblematic picture of the thirty-two years of his Pontificate, which was lithographed in colors and eagerly sought by numerous Catholics, whose houses it may now be seen adorning in frames of varied workmanship. The picture is 18 x 12 inches. In the centre is an excellent likeness of Pius IX., surrounded with a wreath of golden vine. About this are the Pontifical emblems; then a circle of medallions, on which are sketched briefly the events of the thirty-two years of his glorious life. The whole is surrounded by a wreath of oak-leaves and acorns, with pendent scrolls here and there.

In 1878, the city of San Francisco was surprised by a visit from the Apostolic Delegate, Most Rev. Dr. Conroy. He visited the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent on Thursday, the 28th of March, at 8 A. M., and celebrated the holy sacrifice of the Mass in the Convent Chapel, (that "gem of neatness and beauty,") assisted by his chaplain, Rev. Father O'Connell. At this Mass over one hundred children received their First Communion. These occupied the centre portion of the chapel, and were all dressed in white and covered with bridal veils.

After Mass they joined the nuns in Canticles of thanksgiving, and then assembled in lines on the spacious verandah, where, kneeling, they received the Papal benediction from his Excellency. Then, with most amiable condescension, he distributed memorials of the occasion, and, perceiving the anxious desire of the children to kiss his ring and pectoral cross, he handed both to Mother Mary Teresa, that she might present them to

each, and thus satisfy the young communicants. His Excellency kindly expressed himself extremely gratified by the scene he had that day witnessed.

Meanwhile, the Berkeley Convent was near its completion, and the Foundress, knowing that she would soon be called to leave her dear Sacred Heart Convent to go to another in "the Athens of the Western shore," she assiduously instructed the Sisters in all the sacred principles of the religious life. This she had repeatedly done before ; but now her words possessed a singular kindness and unction. She explained the Rule, page by page, dwelling especially on those points that were calculated to establish the reign of the solid virtues of humility and charity which she regarded as the foundations of real happiness in the religious life. Her great love for order and regularity arose from her desire of perfection. Hence she made her religious adopt practically the maxim of her patroness, St. Teresa, to "do always and on all occasions that which is most perfect." She did not confine her instructions to the spiritual life. And if her humility made her shrink from teaching the Sisters literature, she was careful to appoint competent Sisters to train the younger members of the Sisterhood in all the secular knowledge required for the respective duties in the school, from the teaching of the primary classes in the Infant School to the more advanced studies in the higher classes, including music and painting.

CHAPTER XII.

Foundation of St. Joseph's, Berkeley.

THE 27th of May, 1878, was the day settled upon for the departure of the mission for Berkeley. Six of the Sisters were chosen to accompany Mother Mary Teresa. She wished the exit to be as quiet as possible, and for this reason very few knew the day on which she was to leave. She assembled the sorrowing community from which she was about to part the evening of the 26th, and gave them her blessing and last advice: "Keep your Rule, and your Rule will keep you." "Love one another as I have loved you."

After Mass on the morning of the 27th, a hurried repast was partaken of, and then the Sisters assembled on the private piazza to take leave of Mother Teresa and her companions. All were in tears as they presented themselves to receive the blessing and embrace of her who was the soul of the community. Even she whose spiritual, generous and ardent heart delighted to make sacrifice, could not restrain her sorrow when the moment of parting came.

But this was only for a moment. "All for God," were her concluding words, and she entered the carriage which was to convey her to Berkeley Ferry with the same buoyancy and zeal which brought her, nine years previously, from her first Convent to Taylor street.

When the missioners landed in Berkeley they were conveyed to the convent in good Mr. Magee's carriages, and here some kind ladies awaited the nuns. Amongst them were Mrs. Curtis

and Mrs. Lynch of Berkeley, both of whom have since continued kind friends to the convent. The latter lady, a few days after, gave a donation of $200 to Mother Mary Teresa. The Sisters had much labor that day in clearing and cleaning the apartments, particularly that portion which had been used as a chapel since Christmas Day, when the holy Mass was celebrated for the first time in the convent. An old rustic altar had to be pulled down. The natural flowers decorating it had been left on from Sunday to Sunday, and the young Sisters were astonished to find that no amount of sweeping could clear away the insects they had generated. However, scrubbing-brushes and hot water at length succeeded in banishing "the swarm."

Mother Mary Teresa, whose first anxiety was to provide a becoming place for the offering of holy Mass and the repose of the blessed Sacrament, had a suitable altar arranged for the morning Mass. It was the one which had been used in Taylor street before the erection of the marble altar. In the choir she placed some oil paintings formerly used in the chapel of that convent. And here it may creditably be said that the community of the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent have been generous benefactors to the Berkeley Mission.

In that year, 1878, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was celebrated on the 28th of May; and great was Mother Mary Teresa's joy to have the convent founded on that day, so dear to her, when Rev. Father Gualco celebrated Mass at 7 o'clock, and placed the Blessed Sacrament in the little tabernacle.

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon the good pastor returned and gave Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament to the nuns and the children.

The Sunday following (30th May) the convent was solemnly dedicated. We take the account of the ceremony from the San Francisco *Monitor*, published at the time:

"The dedication of St. Joseph's Convent, Berkeley, was attended by a large number of persons from this city and Oakland. The day was unexceptionably fine, and everyone seemed to enjoy it. His Grace the Archbishop missed the regular train, and a two hours' delay prevented his reaching the grounds early enough for the ceremonies. Rev. Father King, of Oakland, assisted by the Rev. Fathers Prendergast, V.G., Gualco, McNally and Serda, proceeded with the blessing. Father Prendergast's sermon was, as usual, forcible and argumentative. He dwelt on the necessity of schooling society, morally as well as mentally, in order that civilization and society itself could be maintained. The Church is admirably endowed with the intelligence and power to do this. It is a physician, having a diploma from God, while secular physicians have their diplomas from men. Which, then, is the best teaching? It can be seen at a glance that the Church is the best. The reverend father ascribed the prevailing corruption in high places to the lack of a suitable moral education, which teaches us that a life of suffering virtue will be rewarded with unceasing glory. The men in high places have not learned this. What wonder, then, that a restless and a dissatisfied spirit is growing? Already the sounds of discontent and the muttering of the gathering storm are heard. With a judicious education, society would not now be in danger. Father Prendergast complimented the Presentation Nuns for their faithful work, in gratifying language, saying that these 'refined and educated ladies' possessed the learning and high judgment requisite in the lofty degree of society (generic term) education which they administered.

"After the sermon and vespers, the priestly procession was formed, and the building apartments, site and grounds were blessed under the name of the Convent's patron saint, St. Joseph, whose name it now bears.

"Archbishop Alemany arrived at the conclusion of the ceremonies, when he took occasion to congratulate the Sisters on the beautiful site of the convent, its symmetry and situation and expressed his deep gratitude to the generous Irishman, Mr. James Magee, for his liberality in donating the lot on which the convent is erected. As we noted last week, this benevolent man was not contented with the gift of five acres of the choicest land in Berkeley, but he has aided materially in the building, and, as the Sisters say, his large charity is still continuing to aid them. The Nuns of the Presentation have been fortunate in gifts since they moved to their new location. Antisell, of Market street, San Francisco, we have just learned, has donated a handsome and valuable organ for the new convent. The building is two stories high, the rooms large and lofty, and are well adapted for the purpose intended. The lot is enclosed by a substantial picket fence, inside which are planted closely all around some hundreds of cypresses and pines, which will in a few years make a dense and well-shaded enclosure. Mother Mary Teresa Comerford, Superioress of the Sacred Heart, will have charge of the convent and will open its school on the 15th inst., with an attendance, it is expected, of about one hundred."

The Foundress gave the convent the title of "St. Joseph's," in gratitude to this great Saint for many favors which she obtained through his intercession. She was accustomed to have daily devotion in his honor during the month of March, and it was remarkable that each day the community was the recipient of many temporal blessings.

The benevolent lady, Mrs. Joseph A. Donohoe, presented to Mother Mary Teresa for this convent, in the names of her dear children, a very handsome chalice and ciborium and various sets of vestments of considerable value. Later, Mrs. and the

Misses Parrott sent to Berkeley a case of ornamental vases to decorate the altar on feast days.

How pleasing to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament must be the solicitude of those good Catholic ladies, who, in a spirit of faith, interest themselves about the "beauty of His earthly Tabernacles," where dwells the most precious treasure of the Church Militant! And what a mystery that God allows His creatures the high, noble, heavenly work of adorning His material temples; and when they avail of this privilege He records the homage offered, "not in words but in deeds," "as crowns of glory to rest on their brows forever!"

Rev. Mother Baptist, the amiable lady Superior of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary, Oakland, and her community, gave many pratical proofs of their sincere friendship for Mother Mary Teresa, in their sisterly charity towards the new Foundation.

Not many pupils presented themselves the first day, and the good nuns, who had been accustomed to teach in the city classes of fifty or sixty children each, felt somewhat odd in sitting at a desk surrounded by ten or twelve girls. But Mother Mary Teresa encouraged them, frequently saying: "If we commence with Good Friday we shall go forward to Easter Sunday, which after all is better than beginning with joy and ending with sorrow." Indeed, she, too, missed the hundreds of happy faces that greeted her in her city school, especially her favorite little "Infants." This small attendance was owing to the scattered residences of the inhabitants and the lack of conveyance; besides, the Public School influence had prejudiced the people here, as elsewhere, against convent schools. Half an hour's instruction was considered too much for the immortal soul; and a short prayer at the beginning and end of school duties a "dreadful loss of time!" Soon, however, people "saw for

themselves," and the pupils daily increased. Mother Mary Teresa was much consoled to find that the lending of the schools for a church on Sundays induced a greater number of people to attend holy Mass than hitherto. This weekly change of the class-rooms into a church, however, gave the Sisters much additional labor and inconvenience. The Sunday School for boys and girls is in charge of the Nuns, and has been well attended from the commencement.

The Foundress was not long in organizing every particular regarding this little community and schools at Berkeley. Here, being disengaged from the multifarious duties which occupied her time in the city, she paid long visits to the chapel. It was before the tabernacle she found her greatest peace, and on days of the Exposition of the Most Holy Sacrament (which were frequent in Taylor street) she spent hours together in silent adoration, and would often say: "I cannot understand how Sisters do not spend every spare moment on those days making reparation for the whole world and our own infidelities." Hers was a spirit of perpetual reparation, and she established in St. Joseph's many practices amongst the Sisters to promote this real devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

The poverty of the Berkeley convent in its beginning furnished many occasions for the practice of this religious virtue, to which she cheerfully submitted. Often would she say: "It is delightful that one has so many opportunities of feeling the effects of holy poverty in this seclusion from the world." She wished to aid in the manual labors, and would stealthily go into the laundry to join the lay Sisters at the ironing. Once she begged a choir Sister to allow her to assist in sweeping the corridors, and said to her: "Ah, Mary! would it not be happy for us that we had been professed as lay Sisters, then, occupied with

God and our work, we would have no cares, no responsibilities! But you know, my child, some one must bear the burden for the love of God."

Sir D. T. Murphy, being at this time in Rome, obtained for Mother Mary Teresa and her community the Apostolic Benediction of Pope Leo XIII., the formula of which was printed under a small oil painting of the Pope, to which his Holiness signed his name.

She was only four months in Berkeley when she got an attack of whooping-cough—an unusual disease at her age. The medical remedy prescribed caused her intense suffering. To this she submitted without a murmur.

After a few weeks, however, the cough disappeared, and the salubrious climate of Berkeley improved her health rapidly. She then directed her attention to another great work, which had for a long time been a subject of anxiety to her.

Sacred Heart Presentation Convent St Cocas Co Kildare Ireland

CHAPTER XIII.

Founding of the Novitiate in Ireland.

DESIROUS to keep her schools in advance of the Public School system,* and knowing, consequently, that the Sisters engaged in teaching the intelligent children of America should be energetic, refined, and thoroughly educated, she conceived the idea of founding a general Novitiate, where young Sisters might be trained to meet all the requirements of the United States missions. Perhaps no place affords a better location for such an Institute than the "Island of Saints." For there true vocations are numerous amongst ladies of independent rank, who receive refined literary education corresponding to the spheres in which they move in the world. These are induced to enter the Presentation Convents by a desire to devote themselves exclusively to the gratuitous teaching of girls. This vocation is one which requires much activity and unceasing self-sacrifice, especially on the American Continent.

Very Rev. Thomas Geoghegan, Vicar-General and Pastor of Kilcock, built from his private resources a magnificent convent in his own parish, and generously offered it to Mother Mary Teresa, to establish there her Missionary Novitiate, which she joyously accepted. The Holy Father approved of its foundation, and sent to it his Apostolic Blessing, in perpetuity. Ne-

*The emissaries of the Public Schools, regarding the Presentation Convents with a jealous eye, seek to draw the pupils from their schools by the attraction of science, while they wholly neglect the culture of the heart. The Presentation Convents unite in their teaching the enlightenment and guidance of the heart and conscience, a profound respect for duties to God and man, with a sound literary education.

cessary delays, however, prevented Mother Mary Teresa going to Ireland till September, 1879.

Meanwhile, death visited her community in Berkeley, and carried away Sister Mary of Lourdes, who was only one year and four months professed. During her last days Mother Mary Teresa scarcely ever left her bed-side. She was consoling her and sweetly disposing her for that supreme end which awaits all human existence. And the young Sister, docile to the teachings of her tender Mother, courageously awaited the hour of her departure, which took place at 2 A. M., on the 5th of May, 1879. At that moment a smile of unearthly beauty passed over her pale young face, and, like a ray from the invisible world, lingered awhile to soothe that Mother who was soon to be laid beside her in the little cemetery of St. Joseph's. She was attended in her last illness by Very Rev. Dr. Comerford, who had been recently appointed Pastor of Berkeley.

A few months later, the Foundress obtained the permission of Pope Leo XIII. to go to Ireland to found the Novitiate Home at Kilcock. This mission had, as it were, in the end, been carried by storm.

Mr. Daniel T. Murphy, with great generosity, defrayed all the expenses of the entire journey from San Francisco to Ireland. With only a few days' notice, Mother Mary Teresa, accompanied by two Sisters from the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent, Taylor street, and one from Berkeley, left California on the 12th of September, 1879.

Mother Mary Teresa, who long ago had abandoned everything to labor for the salvation of souls, never faltered at difficulties in pursuit of their advantage. She aimed at the summit of detachment, and, at the advanced age of over fifty years, joyfully left all that was dear to her in the land of her adoption

to undertake greater labors in the home of her childhood, for the benefit of her foundation in California. In her was verified the maxim that "the more a mother suffers for her children the more she does as a proof of her love for them." Did she not suffer in collecting around her so many religious children! How many pangs had not her solicitude for them cost her? Will she not now waver at the perils of a voyage across the continent and ocean for their advantage? No! Her spiritual motherhood and her affection for her children was rendered supernatural by grace, and that same grace will lead her to cross and re-cross the scorching plain and trackless seas—yea, and even to offer her life as a sacrifice for them.

The Missioners were hospitably received in New York by the Presentation Nuns of St. Michael's Parish, where two of the Sisters remained while awaiting the vessel which was to take them to Ireland.

Mother Mary Teresa and another Sister were with great kindness entertained by the ladies of the Sacred Heart Convent, Manhattanville, as the nuns of St. Michael's were then building and could not accommodate all. Here she met Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Donohoe and Mr. Henry Murphy, all of whom were exceedingly kind and manifested an interest in the new mission.

On September 24th, under the protection of Our Lady of Mercy, the little band of missioners sailed for that Island which had sent out thousands of her children to spread the faith in other lands. The voyage was somewhat rough, owing to the prevalence of equinoctial gales at that season, and Mother Mary Teresa suffered much from sea-sickness. They arrived in Queenstown on the 6th of October, and thence proceeded to visit the South Presentation Convent, the first of the Order—

the Home of Nano Nagle. Here her worthy daughter, Mother Mary Teresa, rested a few days with that estimable community which preserves with jealous care all the traditions of the saintly Foundress of their Order.

The missioners were not many hours in Ireland when the cross greeted them. They were informed that Very Rev. Thomas Geoghegan, the Founder of the new convent, was dangerously ill. The trustful Mother Mary Teresa accepts the trial with resignation. "This excellent clergyman, no less remarkable than his revered cousin (Mother Mary Teresa) for his zeal for souls—a distinguished ornament of the priesthood and a devoted and loving Pastor, whose goodness no words could exhaust because it can never be fully known"—was spared yet longer. His recovery was attributed to the intercession of our Lady of Lourdes.

From Cork the Sisters proceeded to Kildare. Rev. Father Nolan, the venerable Pastor, met them at the railway station, gave them a most cordial welcome, and conveyed them to the convent. The tender care and sisterly charity of the good nuns of Kildare were most beneficial to the health and added much to the happiness of Mother Mary Teresa and her companions after the fatigue of the voyage.

On the 14th of October the eve of the Feast of St. Teresa—that ardent lover of Jesus—they resumed their journey to Kilcock. On their arrival they were met by Very Rev. Father Geoghegan, who welcomed them in the kindest and most affectionate manner. As the carriage drove along, the peasantry congregated and invoked Heaven's choicest blessings on the Presentation nuns who had come over the seas to open a school for the religious training and useful education of their children. The Very Rev. Pastor conducted the nuns to the parochial

church, which is within the convent grounds. Here a number of the parishioners and all the children awaited them.

After the singing of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, the children passed into the sacristy to greet their future teachers, whom they regarded as representatives of Angels. The nuns were then conducted to their magnificent convent. Its architectural proportions are graceful and symmetrical, while its internal arrangements are admirably suited to conventual requirements. The finishing of the interior wood-work is exquisitely neat. The convent is also beautified by stained windows, representing the "Crowning of the Blessed Virgin," "Our Lady of Lourdes" and the "Presentation of Mary in the Temple," (the first is the gift of Mrs. Colgan of Cappagh.) The surrounding grounds are tastefully laid out and planted with ornamental trees.

On the Feast of St. Teresa—the seraphic lover of the Sacred Heart—two masses were celebrated and the SACRED HEART PRESENTATION NOVITIATE was founded, under the auspices of the Patroness of the Foundress, in the county of Kildare, where the Baptismal Patroness of Mother Mary Teresa had once shed the aroma of her virtues and became the mother of those illustrious virgins whose praises are commemorated by saint and bard from time immemorial.

The Foundress eagerly commenced her labor of love in her new convent. Applications from postulants of virtue and ability were numerous, and a good supply of competent teachers were soon admitted. The Board of Education transferred the pupils of the National School at once to the care of the nuns. The paternal interest of the devoted Pastor of St. Coca's contributed much to rapidly advance the Missionary Novitiate to "full working order." His Lordship, Right Rev. Doctor

Walshe, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin granted many privileges to the new establishment, and Right Rev. Dr. Moran, Bishop of Ossory, manifested a deep interest in its success; also Rev. Mother Teresa's esteemed friend, the Most Rev. Archbishop Herbert Vaughan, of Salford, England. The Sisters of the various Presentation Convents in the vicinity of Kilcock gave many affectionate tokens of their deep appreciation of the grand work of their co-religious, and sent them letters expressive of encouragement and co-operation.

The Foundress soon endeared herself to rich and poor by her sweet amiability and humble charity. The latter, especially, were impressed by her benign and gentle bearing, and came to her to seek consolation and relief, and were never disappointed. After her death a Sister wrote from the Novitiate House: "It was quite remarkable the number of cures that were attributed to the application of the relic of the Apostles, Saints Peter and Paul, by Mother Mary Teresa, during her last brief visit to Ireland. Her love and affectionate charity towards the poor were most edifying. She sympathized in their sorrows and comforted them in their afflictions. On one occasion, after she had gone to California, I met an old man who said he wanted to see Rev. Mother Mary Teresa. When asked for what purpose, he replied, 'I want her to give me my hearing.' Another said: 'I am coming to my mother.' And another: 'I am going to tell you all the sorrows in my heart, just to make my confession to you.' She did much to promote devotion towards the Irish saints, that their children might be led to follow their footsteps —not by imitating their extraordinary ways, but by copying their unselfish lives, seeking to live for God in the position in which their Redeemer had placed them, by purity and uprightness of intention, tending steadily towards the supreme good, which is

the true way of sanctity. She related, with an allowable pride and satisfaction, 'the Christian zeal, great sacrifices and missionary labors of the Irish saints' in by-gone days."

Her habit of prayer and union with God seemed to increase under the fervent influences of the "Isle of Saints." After school hours, if she met a Sister passing through the convent and found her disengaged, she would beg her to go to the chapel with her for a few moments as she wanted to obtain some favor, and, in accordance with our Lord's words, "where two or three are gathered together," she hoped the union of prayer would prove fruitful.

Her affection for her children in California was unalterable, either by time or distance. She wrote to them as often as her health and time would permit, and her letters were expressive of the tenderest solicitude for the absent ones. This affection was indeed mutual. "My dear Sisters," wrote she, "be assured, you are always remembered, where alone we can be of any use in this vale of tears—before the altar. No day passes without a fond memento and an earnest petition for all your wants." Or, again, in 1881: "Your Christmas letters and greetings were truly welcome. We had a happy Christmas, but many thoughts about dear California, and earnest prayers to the Divine Infant Jesus and the Blessed Virgin. The Sacred Heart knows how I love you all, and desire only to see you happy."

She did not confine her maternal devotedness to words. Every opportunity she sent sweet *souvenirs*—now it is a usefu book, and then some sacred music or other gift. She suffered much from the cold during the severe winter of '80 and '81, and had a serious attack of illness six months after her arrival, which brought her to the verge of the grave. Even the attending physician lost hope of her recovery. Her children placed

their confidence in prayer, and God restored her. The joy of the poor and the pupils was great to see again their cherished Mother, who seemed to them to be surrounded by a kind of holy prestige, which won their respect and love.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mother Mary Teresa Returns to California.

IN the missionary novitiate, Mother Mary Teresa possessed many consolations, which, to a less perfect soul, might seem a sufficient cause to induce her not to return to the country of her adoption, where, it is true, she had experienced many joys, but where also she had endured many contrarieties. But duty and devotedness to her first mission triumphed over every other consideration, and when she received the permission from the Holy See to leave her cloister once more and cross the uncongenial Atlantic, she knew no hesitation. She wished still to tread the path the saints had trod, who thronged the way to Calvary for eighteen centuries, eager to sacrifice all, to die for and with Jesus.

Here she leaves an affectionate brother, loving sisters, and fond relatives. She places her new community under the protection of the Sacred Heart, and in the care of their good, kind, disinterested Father, the Rev. Thomas Geoghegan, who had for his dear cousin an affectionate esteem, which but increased the pain of separation.

On the 8th of May she sails forever from her native isle, then in comparative good health. Soon, however, her delicate constitution yielded to the terrible nausea of the voyage, which seemed to be more unmerciful than ever before. The journey proved a weary one, and she took but two days' rest in New York, when she resumed travel on the railway cars to Chicago. Here she and her companions were hospitably received by the

Ladies of the Sacred Heart, and met the benign and beloved Archbishop Feehan, who is a relative of the Comerford family. His Grace showed much paternal kindness to Mother Mary Teresa and the Sisters, expressed the deepest interest in her missions, and eulogized the advantages of the Missionary Novitiate. In a letter from Chicago, she says:

"I have been very *ill* on this journey, and needed rest. I feel much improved this morning, and will, D. V., start tomorrow for California. You can have some one to meet us at Berkeley, and then, please God, we can talk over the wonderful ways of God, and how the dear Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary watch over us."

On the 24th of May she left Chicago for her HOME. By some postal error none of the letters announcing her coming reached their destination till some days after her arrival. The pupils had seen her name on the passenger list of the daily papers, and ran breathless to tell the dear Sisters, who, not having received any previous information on the subject, could scarcely credit its veracity. Yet, they knew of no other "Mother Mary Teresa Comerford" but their own. At last, on Friday, the 27th of May, a few lines reached Taylor street from New York, stating that she had arrived there, and would reach Berkeley on the 29th. A dispatch to that effect was all the intelligence the Sisters in St. Joseph's received The joy of all her children in the Californian convents was indescribable.

On Sunday, the 29th of May, at 11.50, A. M., the nuns were delighted to recognize in Mr. Magee's carriage, as it drove up the convent avenue, the amiable countenance of their beloved Foundress, and, after a fond embrace and maternal blessing for each, she expressed her joy to be amongst them once more. The convents in Powell and Taylor streets had sent their repre-

sentatives to greet and welcome her, which cheered her much. Everything in Berkeley charmed her. Nature, at this lovely season, had clothed the trees in their richest robes. The ground that appeared a wild, uncultivated field when she took possession of it, and which she afterwards laid out in tasteful walks, had, under the careful culture of the convent's founder, Mr. Magee, become a beautiful lawn, and the plants she had sown before she left for Ireland were now stately trees. Providence seemed to have blessed and fructified her labors here in a very special manner.

Through the zeal of her brother, Very Rev. Dr. Comerford, the Pastor of Berkeley, a new school for boys had been erected that brought a good attendance of small boys, to be taught by the nuns. Other less material consolations greeted her in the society of her little community.

The annual public examination of the pupils had been arranged for Monday, the 30th of May, the day after her arrival, the notice of which was so short, that the nuns could not postpone it to another time ; neither would the Foundress consent to have the children disappointed. She "wished to see what progress they had made in her absence." The pupils, jubilant for the privilege of her presence, acquitted themselves so creditably in their examinations, that they gladly surprised her. She went around to each to express her approbation, and they commenced their vacation with the brilliant hope that her maternal smile would bless them again at its termination. Her communities in the city, meanwhile, anxiously awaited her, and Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Murphy, of San Francisco, came to Berkeley, when she had been scarcely twenty-four hours there, to take her "across the bay."

This cast an unaccountable sorrow over some of the Sisters there. Was it a foreshadowing that this was her last visit in life? She promised to return to her dear Saint Joseph's to *rest* awhile; and as the carriage drove away her look was earnest and impressive. The Sisters in Powell street, whom she had not seen for nearly ten years, had previously entreated her to pay them a short visit, before she would enter her enclosure in Taylor street. She complied; and the welcome she received surpassed description. A few brief hours were all she allowed herself here, and then, with a fond blessing to each, she left them for her dear convent in Taylor street. The delight of this community was only equalled by the joy of their fond Mother to meet them again.

CHAPTER XV.

Mother Mary Teresa's Illness and Happy Death.

THE news of Mother Mary Teresa's return, which she begged might be kept as "quiet as possible," spread rapidly notwithstanding, and numbers of visitors came to the Taylor street convent to get "only *a word* from her," as some of them said. There is one who "wishes to see again her whose timely aid or sympathy had saved himself and family from ruin." Another, "rejoiced to hear the consoling voice that encouraged her to meet the trials of life with Christian fortitude," and so on; but, alas! this extreme joy soon yielded to its measure of sorrow.

She seemed in very good health for ten days after her arrival, when she sank on the bed of sickness from which she never rose. Of a constitution always delicate, the unwholesome effects of the voyage at her advanced age, and the many mental trials which she encountered in the execution of her designs, hastened the close of her beautiful and useful life, by the painful disease, "gastritis." When her illness became known, the crowds that flocked to offer their prayers and good wishes for her proved how deeply she was beloved by priests and people. Mrs. Joseph A. Donohoe was daily at the convent, inquiring what alleviations the physicians had prescribed, and deemed it a privilege to procure them herself. Deeply did Mother Mary Teresa appreciate the kindness of this estimable lady, who always proved "a friend in need." Mrs. Parrott, Mrs. C. D. O'Sullivan, and many other good ladies, gave tokens of their sincere friendship in this hour of trial.

Not content with the care of the skilful physician, who was all anxiety for the recovery of the invalid, they procured other medical advice, but the opinion of all the doctors coincided with the decision of Dr. Buckley. She suffered considerably in the beginning of her illness. She bore all with most edifying patience, often saying to the Sisters: "My pains are nothing when one thinks of what our dearest Lord endured for us. Heaven is worth all, and much more."

The attending physician, after two weeks, informed the Mothers of Taylor street that he feared her disease would take a fatal turn. From the beginning of her illness she seemed to have a presentiment that her death was approaching, and she felt grateful that the opinion of the doctor was not concealed from her, thanking over and over the venerable mother who announced it to her. She was the first to commence her preparations for the long journey with a calmness and devotion astonishing in one so ill. She begged that the last Sacraments might be administered without delay. On Sunday, the 10th of July, she received them in sentiments of ardent humility and devotion, in presence of her whole community, who, with lighted candles and tearful eyes, assisted at the ceremony. "Never," say they, "shall we forget her edifying example as she repeated the words of the sacred unctions with the Priest." She lingered three weeks after this date, and, till the moment when she expired, her tranquility and self-possession were perfect. A youthful and lovely expression frequently radiated her countenance and the attendants were forced to exclaim: "How young and beautiful our Mother looks."

She wished to see the Sisters individually, and gave to each the counsel suited to her spiritual necessities. Later, she asked to see the Sisters together. When they assembled, kneeling

around her bed, she begged pardon for any pain or disedification she thought she might have given them. Then gave them her last advice, quoting the words of our Divine Lord: "Learn of me that I am meek and humble of heart," "Love one another, as I have loved you;" and saying, "That is all I desire. Pray for me, and ask the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, and the holy angels, to help me in the awful moment of death. My dear sisters, you are making my death a happy one—yes, a truly happy one! Yes, happy, happy, happy! I give you all my poor blessing. Always repeat the aspiration, 'Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like Thine,' and you shall be happy."

She had letters written to her absent children with apologies which only humility like hers could dictate, and assuring each of her love and blessing.

Her crucifix, rosary and relics she kept constantly in view, on her bed, and often asked for the holy water. The Archbishop and Bishop O'Connell came to see her. His Grace gave her permission to receive the Holy Viaticium daily—a privilege which she prized beyond all others, and prepared for it each day as fervently and carefully as she did when in perfect health. From the time her danger was announced to her, she seemed to detach herself perfectly from everything. Even anxieties about her young communities, which had occupied so much of her solicitude till then, appeared all to be absorbed in her trust in Providence. To one of the Sisters she sweetly said: "I am going, now, to our dear Lord;" and then, "'Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, save God alone.'" The sister replied, weeping, "There is hope yet, dear Mother! We cannot let you go!" "My child," she responded, "Would you keep me from God? I must not see any tears!"

A holy priest, for whom she had a great esteem, asked if he might see her for a moment. She quietly told the Superioress to "say to him I am in my agony, and would rather not be disturbed; but beg his prayers for my happy death." She calmly stretched out her hands to say "good-by" to her sister, Mother Bernard, on the Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel.

She was attended by the Jesuit Fathers, principally Rev. Fathers Raffo and Demasini. She received the last absolution many times. When her brother, Very Rev. Dr. Comerford, gave it to her for the last time, he said: "My dearest sister, is there anything you desire of me?" She replied, "may God bless you! Get me out of Purgatory!" and she bade him a last "Farewell"—"that supreme word of life, the last word addressed to us by those who are going to await us in Heaven!"

Like the saints, her idea of God's sanctity made her fear she would be a long time detained in Purgatory, and she told the Sisters the names of the prelates and bishops they were to write to, "the moment I breathe my last," as she said, "to get me out of Purgatory." She could not endure the idea of giving trouble, and every little service rendered her was requited with a sweet "God bless you!" "God will reward you!" She wished the prayers for the dying to be frequently recited by her bed-side, and her nights were one continued prayer. "Invoke the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary," she would say. "I never separate them and dear Saint Joseph, and all the Irish Saints."

Were all that was edifiying and interesting regarding her holy death related, it would outstrip the limits of our little memoir; therefore we must reluctantly omit much that may yet be told in a more extensive biography.

Towards the end of July she rallied a little. A glimmer of hope was held out to the community; it was as a sunbeam before the darkness which was about to lower. But Mother Mary Teresa felt her task was ended. She loved to hear the words of the Church, "Depart, Christian soul," and said: "I want to be familiar with them, for my last moments," and, like her holy Patroness, she gloried in dying a child of the Church. The doctor came at 4 P. M., on the 2d of August, and as there were no visible symptoms of dissolution, he said: "I must change the prescription." After he had gone, she appeared even cheerful for about an hour. Some of the Sisters in attendance withdrew, not expecting the end to be so near. But, at a quarter to 6 she said to the Mother who watched beside her, "I am dying." Yet there was no apparent sign that such was the case. She then said in a loud voice, "God alone! Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I offer you my heart and my soul! Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony! Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul to you in peace!" She then became faint, and the blessed candle and relics, as she requested, were placed in her hands. The community immediately assembled, and she breathed her last without an effort, as the evening "Angelus" pealed from the convent belfry, in the arms of one of her dearest children.

The death of Mother Mary Teresa Comerford, like her life, was humble and sweet. The poor Sisters, so lately rejoicing in her return to her loved mission, had now recourse in their sorrow to the Throne of Mercy, to obtain her speedy entrance into her "glad eternal rest," and to beg for themselves grace to become worthy children of their holy mother, and resignation in their deep affliction. For a moment, the thought that she, who had been the light of their path—their stay and support in

moments of trial, had gone—seemed to overwhelm them with a boundless grief, and as their hearts, bereft of their dearest and purest earthly treasure, went forth towards God to ask His protection, they ended with a tranquil "*fiat*," uniting their spirits with hers, for whom they mourned. They felt that she saw and loved them, and was praying for them!

The body of Mother Mary Teresa, habited in the costume of the Order and holding her vows and crucifix in her clasped hands, was exposed in her cell for one day, where it was visited by the Sisters. It was then conveyed to the chapel. Pious persons of every rank thronged the chapel and begged the portress to let them get "one look at the saint." Her countenance in death was as sweet and serene as in life.

With the most delicate foresight, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Donohoe attended to everything regarding the funeral. We take the following account of the obsequies from the San Francisco *Monitor:*

"From an early hour on Friday, the 5th inst., the friends of the deceased flocked towards the beautiful Convent Chapel of the Presentation Sisters on Taylor street, which was heavily draped in mourning for the occasion. The casket of the deceased Religious was becomingly surrounded with the most beautiful and varied floral decorations ever seen in San Francisco—all the gifts of devoted and distinguished friends of the lamented Rev. Mother. Among the most notable of these costly offerings were the gift of Mr. D. T. Murphy, which consisted of a cross and crown of exotic flowers of beautiful design; a pillar supporting a dove, the gift of Mrs. E. Murphy; a couch of rare flowers, over which was suspended the word 'Rest.' All the numerous designs of these appropriate surroundings of the venerated remains were sweetly emblematic of the many gracious

qualities and noble virtues of the deceased Religious. It was impossible to find even standing room for half those who presented themselves, and stood in waiting for the funeral.

"At 9½ A. M. the Requiem Mass was commenced by his Grace the Most Rev. Archbisbop Alemany, assisted by the Rev. Fathers Lagan and Cottle, Bishop Raymundi, Very Rev. Dr. Comerford, brother of deceased, late a V. G. of the Mauritius, Very Rev. A. Varsi, S. J., Rev. Fr. Vincent Vinyes, Fr. Montgomery, Fr. Largan, Fr. Valentini, Fr. Morrissey, and Fr. King of Oakland. Over forty Priests were present.

"The Very Rev. J. Prendergast, V. G., delivered a short and impressive funeral oration, in which he spoke of the excellence of the state of virginity at length, and said, amongst many religious Orders, one dear to all was the Presentation Order raised up by God in Ireland, at a time when that country was about to emerge from the dark night of religious persecution. The Rev. Father spoke of the glorious foundress of this Order—Nano Nagle; dwelt particularly on her extraordinary vocation, and likened the dear and venerated deceased to her whose worthy daughter she was, saying that, even in character, there was a striking resemblance; that Mother Mary Teresa was the child of a highly respectable family, of rare mental endowments, educated and refined. In 1841 she sought admission to the Order of the Presentation, and, being admitted, received and professed, passed the first years of her religious life in the quiet tranquility of her cloister home. Suddenly on the shores of the Pacific a wonderful city sprang up; all were flocking thither for purposes of gain, and the Pastor of the flock knocked at that convent door to ask for laborers for his vineyard. This young religious at once responds. Home, country, friends, to all she bids adieu, to save souls for her Lord in this distant land.

Through innumerable difficulties she founds, after a year, her first convent—the first of the Order on this continent—on Powell street, of which she was long the beloved Superior. Then, seeking to extend the glory of God, she founded this Convent of the Sacred Heart, on Taylor street, and St. Joseph's Convent, Berkeley—that child of promise—the third fruit, and, last and greatest, that missionary Convent in Ireland, which a short time since she left this country of her choice to establish. All was joy at her unexpected return. But, alas! she came back to die. Her death was the echo of her beautiful life—full of trusting humility, calm resignation and amiable sweetness in her sufferings, with no desire but to be 'dissolved and be with Christ.' The Very Rev. preacher, in conclusion, remarked: 'I have not said much of Mother Mary Teresa; I have said what I thought she would wish, in speaking of the glorious state to which she belonged, and praising the Order of which she was the ornament. We all know her worth. What the saints have done we cannot do, and God even permits that they should have co-operators to accomplish their great works, to keep them humble; yet we may aspire to imitate their virtues, and by doing so we shall all attain to be associated with them in a blissful eternity.'

"The music during the Requiem Mass was under the direction of Mrs. Virginia Nippert, organist of St. John Baptist's Church, who, together with the choir, consisting of Miss M. J. Burns, soprano, Miss Julia Nippert, alto, Mr. V. Kingwell, tenor, Mr. T. Murphy, basso, kindly volunteered their valuable services for the occasion, and acquitted themselves creditably in the well-selected pieces.

"The funeral procession, which was one of the largest ever seen in San Francisco, commenced at 11 A. M. in the following

order: The Religious, carrying lighted tapers; the casket, borne by the following pall-bearers: Joseph A. Donohoe, Eugene P, Murphy, John Sullivan, C. D. O'Sullivan, Robert Tobin, sen., Richard Tobin, Peter Donahue, Myles D. Sweeny, Gustave Touchard, Tiburcio Parrott, F. S. Wensinger, P. McAran and M. J. O'Connor, followed by the young ladies who had graduated at the Institution, and children from other Institutions in the city, wearing crape scarfs; then the younger pupils, wearing bows of black and white ribbon. Having passed along the spacious piazza and school hall, the casket was placed in the hearse. The religious withdrew to their convent. The procession of children and pedestrians formed four abreast, and reached from Sixth street to the wharf, followed by sixty carriages. From the wharf it proceeded, by the Creek route, to Oakland; thence by San Pablo avenue to Berkeley. The procession was joined at Oakland by priests and numerous friends at the other side of the Bay. Long before it reached Berkeley the convent grounds there were thronged with persons awaiting the funeral. When the hearse reached its destination, the casket was carried in procession up the principal avenue into the modest and neat little chapel of St. Joseph's Convent, which was appropriately draped in black, trimmed with mourning flowers. Here the funeral services were repeated by Rev. Father Prendergast, with many assistant priests, after which the nuns of the convent passed in procession around the casket. The clergy, clad in soutane and surplice, followed the nuns; then the casket was conveyed to its last resting place in the cloistered cemetery of this beautiful spot.

"The attendance at the Solemn Requiem and funeral evinced the high esteem in which the deceased Rev. Mother was held by all classes of society, and this assembly testified, by their

sighs and tears, their heart-felt regret and deep affliction for the unexpected departure of one so universally beloved, whose death has left a blank in the large circle of her friends, not easily filled. The sad intelligence of her decease will cause a pang in many hearts beyond the Atlantic Ocean—for there are affectionate hearts that loved her—the Religious of the Convent she had last founded, as well as her estimable relatives and the poor and afflicted whom she consoled and relieved."

Requiem Masses.

On Thursday, September 1st, there was a solemn High Mass in St. Joseph's Convent, Berkeley, for the repose of the soul of Mother Mary Teresa Comerford, the celebrant being her brother, Very Rev. Dr. Comerford. This little church was again draped in deep mourning for its venerated foundress. Many of the pupils and parishioners communicated, offering the spotless Lamb, in union with her beloved brother, for the eternal rest of her to whose indefatigable zeal they will be forever indebted.

Friday, the 2d of the same month, the month's memory of the venerated foundress of the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent, Taylor street, was fittingly celebrated in this magnificent monument of her missionany labors by a succession of Masses from 6 to 9, at which numbers of the pupils and many of the friends communicated.

Monday, September 5th, the nuns of the Presentation Convent, Powell street, had a solemn High Mass celebrated in St. Francis' Church, at which nearly 1,000 children assisted. On this occasion Very Rev. J. Prendergast, V. G., delivered an appropriate discourse.

IN MEMORIAM.

Rev. Mother Mary Teresa Comerford of the Presentation Order.

Submissive to her summons sweet,
One bright autumnal day,
I sought with sad, yet willing feet,
Her new-built cloister's calm retreat,
Across the shining Bay.

It was, she said, "to bid adieu
But for a season's space."
Alas! alas! I little knew,
O friend so tender, pure and true,
That on thy living face,

So bright, so fresh with holiest life,
Whose glance could banish pain,
Whose smile with saintly sweetness rife,
Could soothe my wildest spirit-strife,
I ne'er might look again!

She uttered words of counsel wise,
And consolation sweet:
With soul outshining from her eyes,
She spake of Duty's high emprise,
And calm Perfection's heights that rise
Above Earth's desert heat.

And then she breathed her fond farewell;
And o'er the shining Bay,
Back, where the world's "drear noises" swell,
Back, where its careworn legions dwell,
Once more I took my way.

And she unto her native land
Rejoicing sped, to train
Her glorious missionary band,
Her toilers for the harvest grand,
Far o'er the Western main.

Time passed—till she, whose heart so yearned
Their Westward guide to be,
Whose spirit's zeal too fiercely burned
For its frail shrine, for rest, returned
Unto that sunset sea.

She found it—dreamless, calm and deep—
A never-ending rest!
Where Love doth "give His loved ones sleep"—
Where white-robed throngs their Sabbath keep,
By life's "still waters" blest.

Submissive to a summons sent
From out her loved retreat,
With sad, reluctant steps I went
Where thou, O heart, with sorrow rent,
Hadst hoped, when exile's time was spent,
Her glad return to greet.

Alas ! from out her mourning band
No smiling mother came
To tell of hopes and prospects grand,
To shrine with tender clasp my hand,
And fondly breathe my name.

They led me to a coffin, dressed
With blossoms' bright array,
And there, in Death's mysterious rest,
With cold hands crossed on pulseless breast,
Serene and still she lay.

The sad and solemn rites went on—
The requiem low was sung—
The tapers shed soft rays upon
The placid features, pale and wan;
And then, while dirges rung,

They bore, still draped with blossoms sweet,
That silent form away,
Where rev'rent hands its grave-bed meet
Had made, within her loved retreat,
Across the shining Bay.

There, treasured by her orphaned band,
Her holy dust shall be—
And there her softly-breathed command
Shall seem to sound; her guiding hand
In dreams they still shall see.

O holy tomb! from world-unrest,
Its "burden and its heat,"
'Twere well to seek thy silence blest,
And find repose for tortured breast,
And rest for way-worn feet.

And from the soul, whose casket lies
Within thy depths, to learn
The charm of Duty's high emprise,
And where Perfection's heights arise,
With steadfast steps to turn.

And from those heights to Life's home, near,
To pass, when toil is o'er—
And with *her*, through the endless years
To dwell, nor weep sad, farewell tears,
Nor mourn death's partings more.

MARIE.

SAN FRANCISCO, August, 1881.

CHAPTER XVI.

Conclusion.

THE sad news of Mother Mary Teresa Comerford's death spread rapidly, and expressions of condolence, regret and admiration poured into Taylor street from every quarter. Sir Daniel T. Murphy sent a telegram from New York to her brother, Very Rev. Dr. Comerford, and her bereaved sister and the community in Taylor street. Then followed letters from prelates and priests. We will quote a few words written by an eminent Archbishop beyond the Atlantic: "She was, indeed, one of the grandest and most generous souls I ever met in the religious life. Her latter years were laden with the Cross which prepared her for eternity; she now rejoices in all that she suffered. Her one desire was to advance the cause of God according to her ability. May God supply her place to you all." And from Kilcock a friend writes: "The sorrow amongst the people here for Mother Teresa's death is deep and wide-spread."

What wonder that the grief for the death of such an intrepid champion of religious education as Mother Mary Teresa should be "wide-spread," when we consider that it was only her trust in Divine Providence that could have enabled her, with means apparently so inadequate, to attempt and successfully accomplish all that she undertook for the glory of God and the gratuitous education of girls. This was the secret of her success. She had one aim, and one desire—to please God and do His holy will. She devoted herself, body and soul, to do her Master's

work with an undivided heart and an unwavering purpose ; and He whom she loved seemed ever with her, blessing her efforts, and therefore she *succeeded*.

Who can estimate what she achieved in the teaching of those thousands of children who had passed through her schools within the (nearly) thirty years of her life in California?—in those seminaries which she raised, where the standards of religion and intellectual education pace side by side. Nor will her deeds be limited to what she performed during her earthly career. Her labors still grow, prosper and flourish in the communities she established, and taught to walk in the faith of religious perfection, more by the example of her holy life than by precept. She still shall live in her *works*, and her spirit shall guide *them*.

We have no hope that this little memoir will answer to the faintest outline of the picture * impressed on the minds and hearts of those who witnessed the life and labors of Mother Mary Teresa, and were edified by her ardent love for God and her charity towards her neighbor which even ingratitude failed to alter; her patience in suffering, mentally and physically, which knew not how to complain; her obedience, which inspired her to accept the responsibilities of the California Mission and led her even on her death bed to ask the most trivial permission of the Mothers or Infirmarian; her esteem for religious poverty which caused her on the verge of the grave to seek for the *dime* that remained in her travelling purse that she might give it up to die poor like Jesus; and last, but not least, her sincere humility, which attributed all that was good in herself and her works to God alone.

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* Mother Mary Teresa Comerford was tall, erect, and well proportioned; her movements dignified and graceful; her complexion fair; her features well formed, serene and intelligent, and the whole expression of her countenance was benignant and energetic.

Our little task of love is ended. Would that it were more worthy of the beloved and revered subject. All that we may dare desire now is that these few pages may tend to the greater glory of God.

APPENDIX.

THE PAPAL JUBILEE.

THE Sacred Heart Presentation Convent, on Taylor street, was the scene of a very interesting commemoration of the Pope's Pontifical Jubilee. The pupils formed a handsome procession through their various study-halls and recreation-grounds, which were gaily and tastefully decorated. The most attractive adornments were placed around a life-size bust of the Pope at the termination of the spacious verandah. The bust rested on a white pillar, ornamented with gold and natural flowers, while above was a graceful arch of laurel leaves, intermingled with roses and lilies; and in the background were various decorations, consisting of Papal banners and other Pontifical emblems. Here and there might be seen the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the "Harp of Erin." As the youthful processionists passed before the representation of the Pope, they placed beneath it floral crowns and baskets, while their child-voices caroled forth their jubilant notes of "God Bless our Pope." An address to the Pope, written by the gifted poet, "Marie," was then read. A copy of the address had been previously illuminated on parchment by the nuns of the convent, and forwarded to Rome, in due time for the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Holy Father's Consecration, through the exiled Bishop of Lower California, Monsignor Raymund Maria Moreno. The illumination of the va-

rious pages were appropriately chosen, the richly-colored floral borders being interspersed with the Papal emblems and insignia. The binding was in morocco, gold and blue, with golden tassels. The procession next proceeded to the handsome chapel of the convent, where Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament terminated the commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Episcopate of His Holiness Pius IX.

Poems.

THE following poems, from the graceful pen of the gifted Miss Harriet M. Skidmore, are appended to this little volume, since they relate to incidents of the life of Mother Mary Teresa while in the Taylor street Convent, San Francisco:

ADDRESS

To the Holy Father Pope Pius IX., on the Fiftieth Anniversary of His Episcopal Consecration, 1877.

Dearly loved and Holy Father,
From beyond the boundless sea
Speed the gladly-welcomed tidings
Of thy coming Jubilee.
Happy morn's the "Golden Milestone"
On the pilgrim path of time,
That shall show the glad completion
Of an age's wondrous prime;
That shall bring the blessed vision,

Framed within that noon-day glow,
When the Apostolic mitre
Rested first upon that brow,
Whence the triple-crowned tiara
Sheds its mystic splendor now.
Favored subjects of Spoleto,
Favored by his holy sway,
Sweet to hear your holy Pastor,
Sweet his mandates to obey.
E'en the sword of wild sedition
Fell from fierce rebellious hand,
When that voice of strength and sweetness
Spoke the language of command.
And what wealth of fervent blessings
Did his grateful flock outpour
On their tender-souled Archbishop
In the time of evils sore—
In the time of woes unnumbered,
By the dreadful earthquake wrought,
When his hand divinely loving
Fullest, sweetest, solace brought!
Happy Tinola! that won his
Glorious labors for thy fold
Only in the angel record
Fitly are these labors told.
There the orphan band was sheltered,
There the holy Levites trained,
And the sinful soul repentant
Boons of blessed peace regained.
Thus the true and faithful pastor
Trod the pathway of his Lord,

Winning, through long years of labor,
Love's unlimited reward.
Came at last the glorious guerdon
Of that servant fond and true ;
"Many things to him entrusted
Who was faithful o'er the few."
Bowed a willing throng before him
'Neath Saint Peter's mighty dome,
"Hail! O Pontiff, King and Father
Of the universal Rome!"
But his road is as his master's,
Blessings changed to cruel blows,
Scarce had ceased the loud evivas
When the fierce revilings rose.
Died again that wrathful clamor,
Silenced for a blessed space,
While from out the broken storm-cloud
Came the sunny beams of grace.
Lo! the throng of deeds resplendent
Pictured in the golden light—
First, the figure-star encircled,
Clad in robe of stainless white.
Mary! Hail! Immaculate!
Peerless title, won for thee,
By the longed-for Definition,
By our Pontiff's blest decree.
Next, a radiant form upraiseth
From the everlasting rock—
Church of God, alike thou scornest
Artful snare and battle shock;
For the voice that speaketh for thee

From thy Pontiff's changeless throne,
As the voice of truth unerring
All thy faithful children own,
And a guardian true and tender
Stands thy shining form beside;
He, the Child-God's fond Protector,
Will His church securely guide.
He was named the world-wide Patron,
By the Pontiff's potent voice,
While enraptured earth applaudeth
Evermore that welcome choice.
Blessed visions! deeds resplendent
Of the Universal King,
Every heart in ceaseless peans
Shall His name forever sing.
But his road is as his Master's:
Blessings crowned him yesterday;
O'er the "Via Dolorosa"
Leadeth now his weary way,
Ingrate children bind and scourge him,
Bid him wear the thorny crown,
While the dew of grief and anguish
Flows his wounded face adown.
But, O bravest, grandest Ruler
Of the universal flock,
Still thy mystic throne remaineth
Firm on Truth's Eternal Rock;
Still thy children cling around thee—
Closer cling thy throne beside,
For thy woes but make thee dearer,
Likeness of the Crucified.

And while round the herald echoes
Of thy crowning Jubilee,
Lo! we send our joyous answer
Spreading o'er the Western Sea—
Answer of congratulation
From the hearts that fondly glow,
Grateful for thy consecration
Offered fifty years ago.
Once Columbia knew the presence,
Once she shared thy labors blest:
By that memory, King and Father,
Give thy blessing to the West.

THE BANQUET OF THE KING.

[Suggested by witnessing the first Communion of one hundred and ten children in the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent, on the feast of the Annunciation.]

I KNELT within a "garnished room,"
Where shone the banquet fair,
I saw the festal garlands bloom
In fragrant beauty there.

I heard the glad, triumphant strain
In clearest chorus ring,
Of hymns that hailed in fond refrain,
The coming of the King.

He came adown His path of light,
To keep His royal feast—
A Monarch, hid from human sight,
The Victim and the Priest.

In bridal robes and garlands fair
The favored guests I saw;
Bright youthful forms assembled there,
And bowed in love and awe.

A happy multitude they knelt
Beside that table blest:
'Twas o'er, in each pure heart He dwelt
Their King, their Food, their Guest.

How blest each soul wherein He found
A "swept and garnished shrine,"
How sweet to know His peace profound,
His happiness divine!

O radiant morn! O blissful day!
When heaven descends to earth!
And Love doth hide, in homes of clay,
His gems of priceless worth.

O guests of God! keep watch and ward
Around your treasure fair,
And day and night his temples guard
With fond, unceasing care.

On altars decked with fragrant bloom
Keep bright the vestal flame,
And close from earth the "upper room,"
Wherein the Master came.

That so, enrobed in bridal white,
And crowned with festal flowers,
Your souls may tread the aisles of light
That lead through fadeless bowers.

There, decked and wreathed, the temple stands
Of heaven's eternal Priest—
His banquet hall where angel hands
Shall spread your nuptial feast.

MARIE.

THE ALTAR AND THE OFFERINGS.

[Suggested on witnessing the ceremony of the Reception of four Novices in the Sacred Heart Presentation Convent, Taylor street, soon after the erection of the beautiful marble altar donated by Mr. George Conroy. It was decorated for the occasion with the ornaments recently brought from Rome by Sir D. T. Murphy and presented to Mother Mary Teresa. A few weeks later a Requiem Mass was celebrated for the repose of the soul of the benevolent donor of the altar.]

EARTH rendered up her richest store,
Her treasured marbles rare,
And Art her magic chisel brought
To carve an altar fair.
O precious gift! O wondrous work!
From out the shining stone

Was hewed Love's fitting sepulchre,
Was reared His mystic throne.
A bounteous hand that boon bestowed
Within a cloister calm,
Where dwell in sacred solitude
The spouses of the Lamb.
Earth sought again her hidden store,
Far in the darksome mine,
For gleaming gold and silver rare
To deck that stately shrine ;
Another gift-conferring hand
These peerless boons bestowed,
And bade their blending glory shine
In Love's serene abode.
First on that fair and fitting shrine
The "clean oblation" shone;
First offered, lay the Victim-Lamb,
On that pure altar-stone.
A chosen band, in bridal robes,
Here breathed the sacred vow,
And bowed before their King divine,
The meek, adoring brow.
Here offered lay the willing hearts,
The consecrated soul ;
Here courage broke the gods of clay,
And spurned their base control—
Sweet offerings for that altar fair,
Pure gems to deck the shrine
Where gleams the jewel earth hath won
From heaven's courts divine !

While yet its Summer's early glow
With promise sweet was rife,
The bloom of glad completeness crowned
A rare and glorious life;
And so the swift-winged angel sped
Adown his path of gloom,
To treasure, in his Master's sight,
That fair, perfected bloom.
And he, whose generous bounty gave
The rare and costly shrine,
To guard the gracious holocausts,
The sacrifice divine—
While yet his early Summer shone
With earthly promise rife,
Gave sweetly to the Giver's hand
His pure and perfect life.
They twined the fair and fragrant crown,
They wove the cross of flowers,
And strewed upon his sacred bier
The gems of earthly bowers;
They brought the deftly-woven cross,
They brought the blooming crown,
And, at the shrine his zeal bestowed,
They laid the offering down.
O touching tribute, fondly placed
Before the captive King
Enthroned upon that altar fair,
His servant's offering!
There soon shall speed your fragile life,
O frail and fleeting flowers!
But fadeless are the spirit-blooms

Of glad immortal bowers.
Grow there, O pure and generous soul !
Amid the joys Elysian,
To bloom at Love's eternal shrine,
To "gladdden in Love's vision;"
For sweetly thou hast heavenward sped
Upon the path of prayer
Traced by the consecrated band
Beside thy altar fair.
And still for thee the incense-breath
Of supplication sweet
Shall rise and wreathe a fragrant cloud
Around the Mercy seat.
No fairer monument to thee
Can fond affection raise,
No truer epitaph can trace
Thy well-earned meed of praise
Than the pure altar thou hast reared.
Within the cloister calm,
Where dwell the chosen brides of Christ,
The spouses of the Lamb,
There shall the Victim offered be,
The "clean oblation" shine,
There shall the vestal band be brought
To serve the King divine.
And while the hosts of Israel strive
With Canaan throng of sin,
There lifted hands shall aid the right
Its victory to win.
And justice, when the pure shall plead,
Shall sheathe its vengeful sword,

And stay the whelming tide of wrath
That chafeth to be poured.
Thus shall the grace that saves a world
Around that altar cling,
And heaven uprear its earthly throne
On the blest offering.

MARIE.

JUNE 24, 1877.

CENTENNIAL OF THE PRESENTATION NUNS.

A GREETING FROM THE PRESENTATION NUNS IN CALIFORNIA.

AYE, let us keep our birthday feast,
O dearest Sister band;
From North to South, from West to East,
Ring out the peans grand;
Let heaven's pure joy resound on earth,
And bid the nations hear
The strains that hailed our Order's birth
That greet its hundredth year.

O worldly hero! tears and blood
Blot out thy shining name;
Thou swim'st ambition's gory flood
For evanescent fame,

Dark desolation marks the path
That felt thy blighting tread—
Thou sweep'st o'er earth in conquering wrath
And fill'st her plains with dead.

But when thy banners cease to wave
O'er vanquished land and sea,
Earth smiles above thy pompous grave
To know that she is free;
Free from thy ceaseless battle roar,
Thy fiendish battle scene—
Free from the ghastly floods of gore
That dyed her fields serene.

But she around whose blessed name
Our fitting wreaths we twine,
Hath won an everlasting fame
In heaven's court divine.
For her's the fair and fragrant life
Of duty nobly wrought;
And her's the pure and peaceful strife
'Gainst vice and error fought.

From the gay tumult of the world
She turned in scorn away,
And from her soul's pure altar hurled
The idols of its clay,
Blest Angela! thy holy rule
First won her offered heart—
She formed therein a blessed school
To learn the better part.

One want that tender heart discerned—
The poor alone it sought;
For them its tender pulses yearned,
Its deeds of love were wrought,
Upon her own dear native soil
How ample was the field ;
How rich might be the fruit of soil,
How vast the harvest yield !

And so her Presentation band
Their wondrous work begun ;
And 'neath the guidance of her hand
What noble deeds were done !
But dangers thronged their early path,
And thorny barriers rose—
The blame of timid friends, the wrath
Of fiercest bigot foes ;

But from the source of strength above
Came strength to do and dare,
And in the blessed beams of love
The vineyard ripened fair.
Dark danger vanished from their path,
The thorny barriers fell,
And coward chill and fiercest wrath
Soon owned the softening spell ;

And thus by sweet celestial art
Full many a shrine appeared—
And ah! in many a darkened heart
A fairer shrine was reared,

That bade all own the cloistered nun
Most potent influence hath
Upon the young and wayward one
She trains in Learning's path ;

For kept in calm seclusion free
From worldly strife and care,
Her mind a fitter shrine must be
For Learning's treasures rare.
And o'er her consecrated brow
A halo seems to shine
That bids the youthful spirit bow
As to a light Divine;

And for the world she winneth gifts
From Heaven's own casket fair,
For she, like Israel's leader, lifts
Unceasing hands of prayer.
But Erin could not keep alone
The Presentation bands ;
Behold! they pass from zone to zone,
They toil in farth'est lands;

To distant India's torrid clime
The dews of grace they bore—
Their convent bells ring out their chimes
On bleak Newfoundland's shore.
Far o'er the fragrant Southern Sea,
Beneath Australian skies,
Their homes of peace and purity
In sunlit beauty rise.

E'en here within the golden West,
On El Dorado's soil,
They've built their sacred convent nest—
They've wrought with ceaseless toil—
And now, from out that Western home,
Across the crested sea
They bid their white-winged herald roam
To join the Jubilee—

To share the bliss, without alloy,
Of Erin's Sister band;
To swell their pean notes of joy
From out the sunset land;
To bid Heaven's strains resound on earth,
Heaven's smile reflected glow;
And thus they hail their Order's birth
One hundred years ago.

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[Hagerty, Josephine]
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1. Comerford, Mary Teresa, mother, 1821-1881. I. Title.

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